The Future of Workplaces

By Abhijeet Rane, Techaisle
Tavishi Agrawal, Techaisle

This report was underwritten by Skype.
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About Abhijeet Rane

Abhijeet Rane is a veteran industry analyst and an early advocate of cloud computing. He cut his teeth in the field while at vJungle, where he pioneered the development of a service-oriented architecture-based platform. He was also a Business Consultant at Microsoft in the Natural Interactive Systems Division (NISD), working on speech recognition and natural language processing, and helped build the business plan for Speech Server. He started his foray into market research after being recruited as research analyst at IDC covering home office, interactive services and small business markets. Abhijeet frequently writes and blogs about latest technology adoption among small businesses. At Techaisle, Abhijeet heads up consulting and SMB segmentation practice.

About Tavishi Agrawal

Tavishi specializes in quantitative research focusing on small and medium (SMB) market segments and emerging technologies such as cloud computing and the effect of social media on marketing strategies. She has authored many global reports on tablet PC adoption, telepresence and small business IT priorities. She is also credited with developing a new marketing plan for the Center for International Trade Development in partnership with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. In her spare time, Tavishi provides marketing support and develops online campaigns for UnitedProsperity.org, a non-profit organization that helps combat extreme global poverty through microfinancing. At Techaisle, Tavishi heads up all quantitative research practice.

About Techaisle

Techaisle is a global SMB IT market research and industry analyst organization. Headquartered in San Jose, Calif., it also has offices in Europe and Asia/Pacific. The

company is founded on the premise that go-to-market strategies require actionable research, flexible data and deeper analysis. Each of its senior analysts has spent an average of 20 years with major research companies such as IDC and Gartner. Utilizing its quality-certified primary research centers, Techaisle conducts surveys with SMBs and channels to understand market trends, opportunities, buying behavior, purchase intent and IT priorities. Besides delivering forward-looking analysis on emerging technologies such as SMB cloud computing and mobility, its channel research coverage provides an in-depth analysis of resellers and distribution channels globally. Techaisle offers its clients six major services: SMB Syndicated Research, Custom Consulting, Worldwide IT Market Opportunity Sizing, Channels Research, Reseller Universe Sizing and Market Segmentation.

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Introduction

Technology has always impacted the way we work, but the essential nature of work has largely remained unchanged. Getting actual work done has typically involved bringing people together in a single physical location for a specified period of time to execute tasks; historically, this has been the only choice.

That aspect continues to hold value, but over the last decade, a confluence of technological advancements has made it easier to minimize the need to be physically present in an office space. As new technologies take hold, businesses' attitudes toward requiring people to be physically present have also changed. Indeed, the very meaning of commonly used phrases such as "showing up for work" and "normal working hours" is changing.

But the changing nature of work isn't limited to just a different notion of time and place. The nature of relationships between employees is also changing rapidly. Increasingly, these relationships extend across different time zones and geographies, and require better technologies to create effective work environments.

The shift is also evident in the way businesses are run. A business is essentially a collection of different processes that enable the creation and consumption of products and solutions. The efficiency of those processes dictates the success or failure of a business. New ways of working are leading to a fundamental re-engineering of such processes, once again fueled by emerging technologies.

Central to this change has been the ever-increasing access to high-speed Internet services; the development of advanced mobile devices such as notebooks, iPads, tablets and smartphones; and the emergence of cloud-based services such as Box.net, Huddle, Yammer and Dropbox. What's more interesting is the way these technologies have permeated the workplace. In large part, social networking, simple collaboration and sharing tools, cloud-based storage services and touch-based tablets have entered

the workplace in a bottom-up way, meaning that individuals started using these technologies for personal reasons, then insisted on using them for work as well. For example, as users become more and more fluent with iPhones and iPads, they want to access their business applications on those devices, along with Android-powered handsets, iPads and any other cool new device that comes to market. Two prime examples of this are the shifting of email usage from the desktop to a smartphone and video capabilities like Cisco's WebEx solution and Skype being usable on the desktop as well as a smartphone. Skype started off as a means to communicate personally with friends and relatives; businesses quickly absorbed it when employees found the service an extremely convenient way to be in touch with their co-workers and colleagues across cities and countries.

This guerilla approach is not limited to a specific technology, and IT managers need to recognize this as a wave, which we call the "consumerization of IT," where consumer-oriented technologies and behaviors get adapted within the enterprise workflow and workplace. Such technologies, which were originally targeted toward consumers, include: iPhones, flip video cameras, Skype, Facebook and Twitter.

In this paper we explore the future of work and the workplace in terms of:

- The shifting physical place of work
- Flex work (flexible working schedules) becoming a defining feature
- Consumer-grade technologies accelerating new work styles
- The emerging "new worker" persona

Executive Summary

Over the last decade, technological advancements have minimized the need for employees to be as physically present in a traditional office setting. Central to this change is the ever-increasing access to high-speed Internet services, mobile technology and cloud-based collaboration services. And increasingly, these tools are also changing the nature of employee relationships, which often extend across different time zones and geographies and require better and better technologies to create effective collaborations.

This paper discusses the future of work and the workplace in that context. We examine the shifting nature of actual workspaces, from four office walls to the online world; the emergence of new flexible hours that no longer require a nine-to-five mindset; the role of consumer-grade technologies such as iPads, smartphones and notebooks in the workplace; and what role cloud-based services such as Box.net, Huddle and Dropbox play.

Survey Methodology

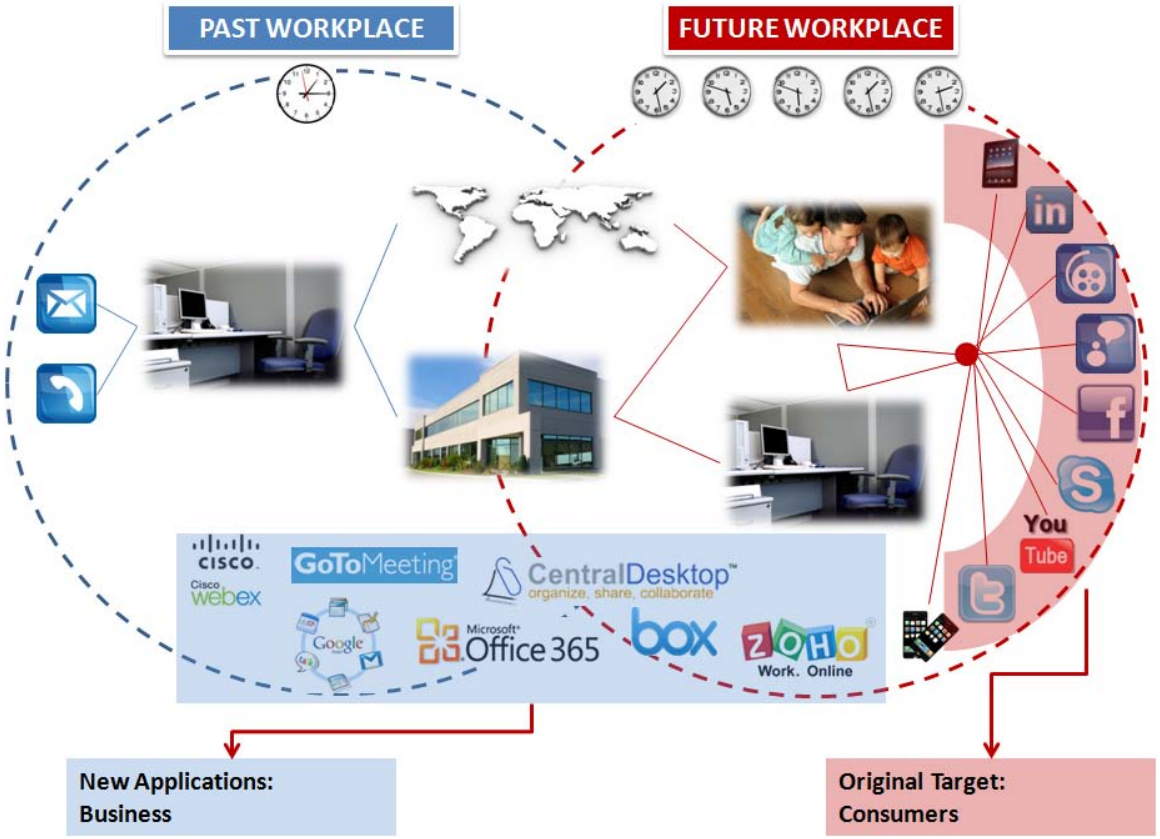
The data in this paper is based on an online study of 1,000 technology-empowered workers in the U.S. exploring the rise of new communication tools in the workplace and what that means for how we work today.

Survey respondents include 500 communications technology end users and 500 communications technology decision makers in U.S. organizations that range in size from SOHO to large enterprise and across industry sectors.

Fieldwork took place from Nov. 24 through Dec. 1, 2010.

Research was conducted by Incites on behalf of Skype and GigaOm Pro, based on a sample provided by Research Now, one of the leading global online business and consumer panels.

The Future of Work



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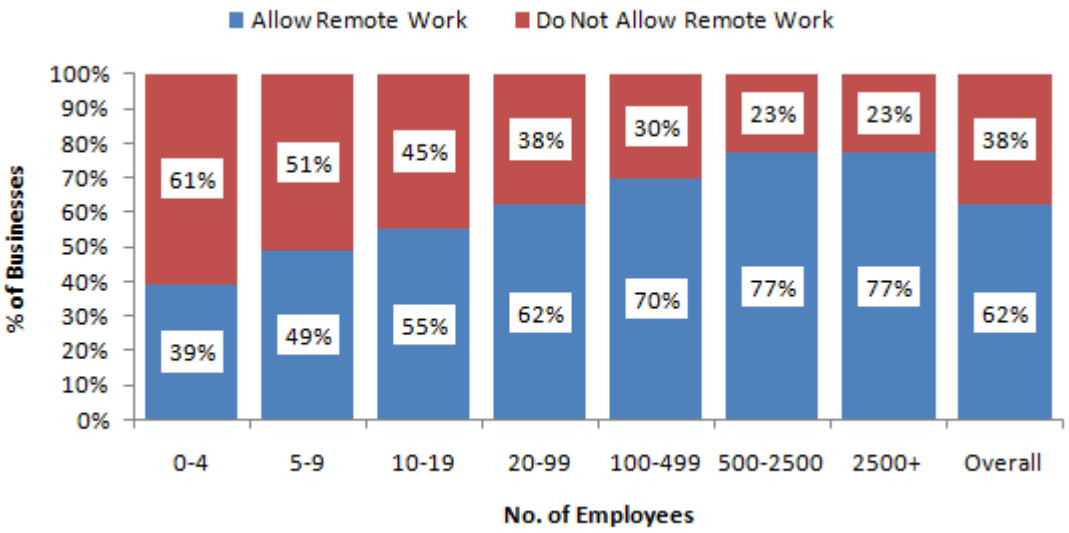
An Evolving Sense of Time and Place — The Shifting Physical Place of Work

In a recently conducted survey of both users and decision makers, 62 percent of businesses reported having employees who work remotely either full time or part time. Of these businesses, 34 percent of employees conduct work away from the office, spending about 40 percent of their time at either a client site, at home or in public spaces.

These numbers are not only startling, they are also testament to the actual shifting physical place of work, from gray-colored cubicles to homes, hotels, airports and other locations, within the same city or across continents.

The percentage of companies that allow remote work varies by the size of the business. Larger businesses are more likely to allow remote work as a matter of policy than small businesses. This is not only because it is becoming easier and cheaper to work remotely, due to consumer-grade tools, but also because it's becoming clear that remote working programs benefit both employees and employers through increased productivity, reduced overhead and happier employees. The contrast is quite sharp, with less than half of very small businesses allowing remote work versus over three-quarters of large businesses allowing employees to work from remote locations.

Businesses Allowing Remote Work



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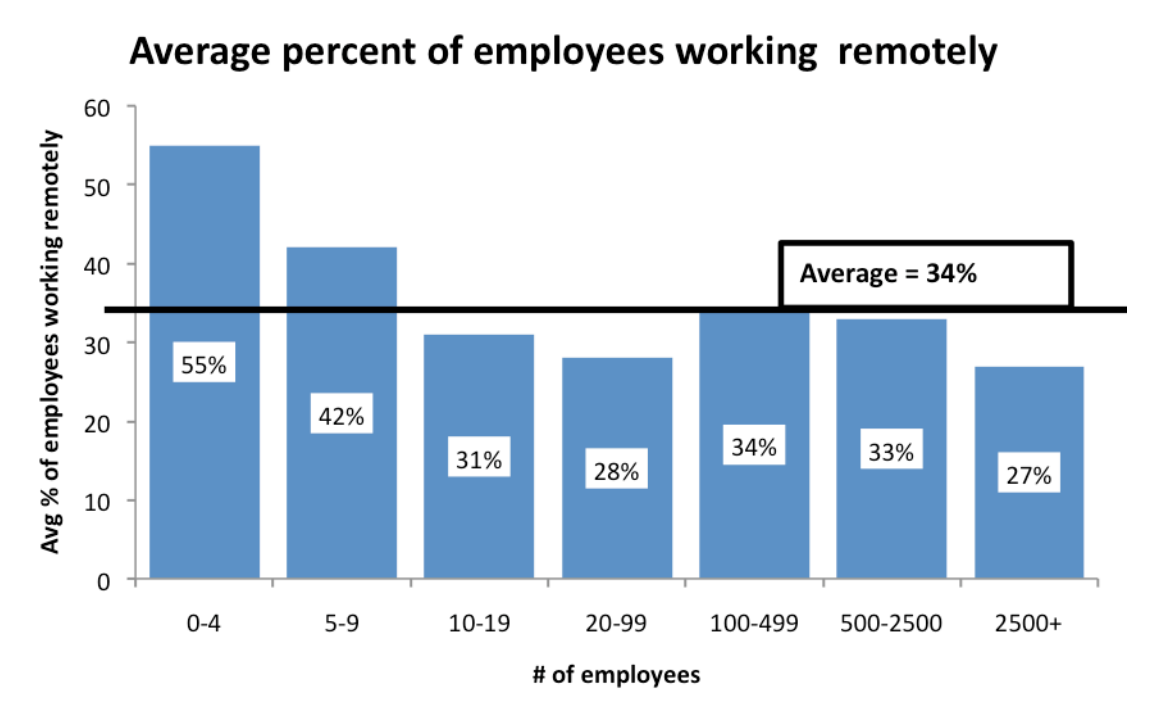
The inflection point for allowing remote work appears to come fairly quickly as the number of employees at a business exceeds five. That said, small companies that do allow remote work are likely to have a greater percentage of employees working remotely than larger companies; those workers are also likely to spend more time working remotely than workers in large companies, because there is more to do for fewer people in smaller companies.

Hence the physical place of work is not only shifting, but the percentage of time spent working remotely is also increasing.

Average Percent of Employees Working Remotely



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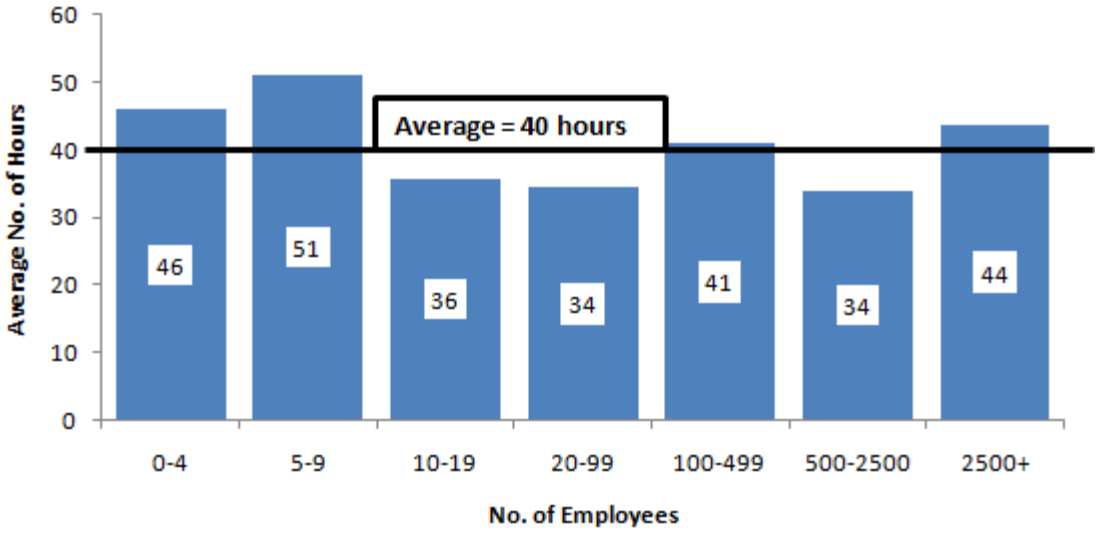
Average Hours Worked Remotely



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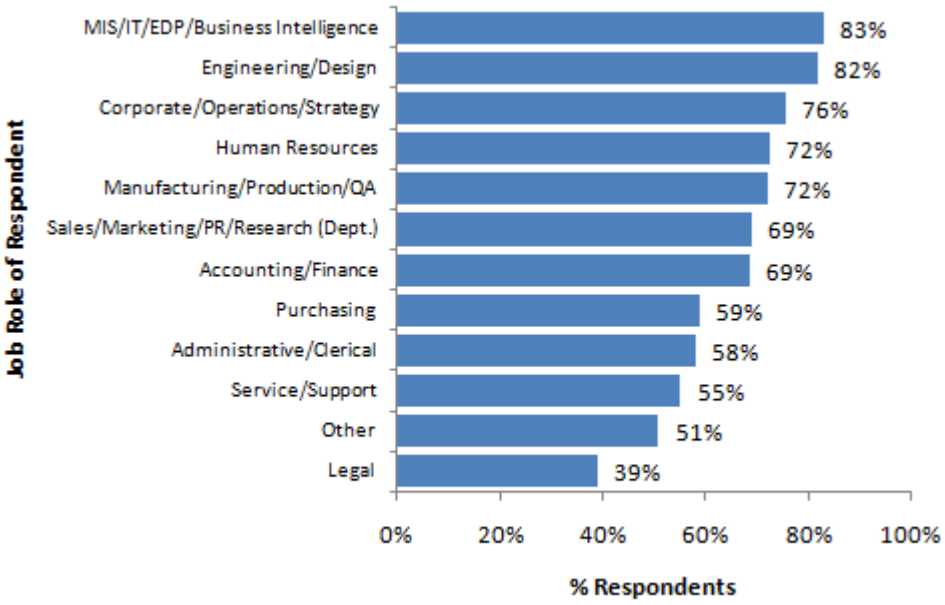
The amount of time spent working remotely varies a lot depending upon job type. Certain roles, such as IT/MIS and engineering design, exhibit higher degrees of remote work. Also, as one would expect, sales and field service people spend most of their time in the field and therefore exhibit the greatest amount of time working remotely. In contrast, administrative, clerical and legal job roles exhibit the lowest level of remote work.

Remote Work by Job Type

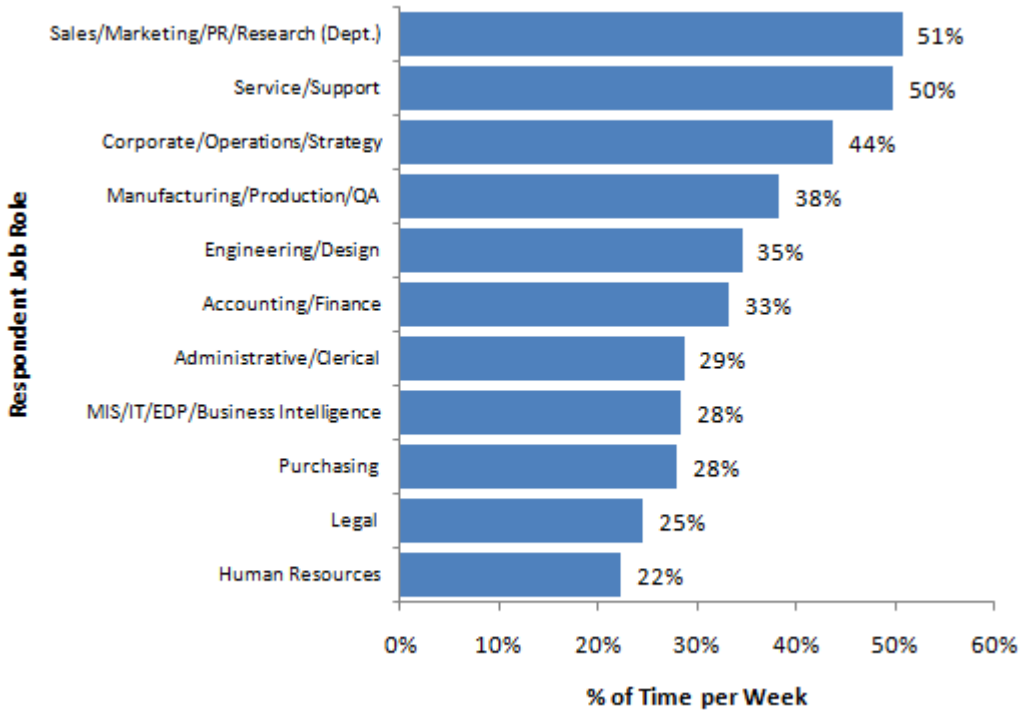


Source: GigaOM Pro

The above chart does not tell the entire story; the fact that one type of worker spends more time working remotely than the other may be a statement of fact, but the reality is that distributed work styles impact everyone in the organization. This is leading to the redesigning of organizational processes and policies.

Over the years, we have seen the evolution of new roles and titles within businesses, such as chief knowledge officer, chief security officer and the like. We would not be surprised if in the future workplace, there are positions and titles such as chief workplace officer.

Percent of Time Spent Working Remotely by Job Type



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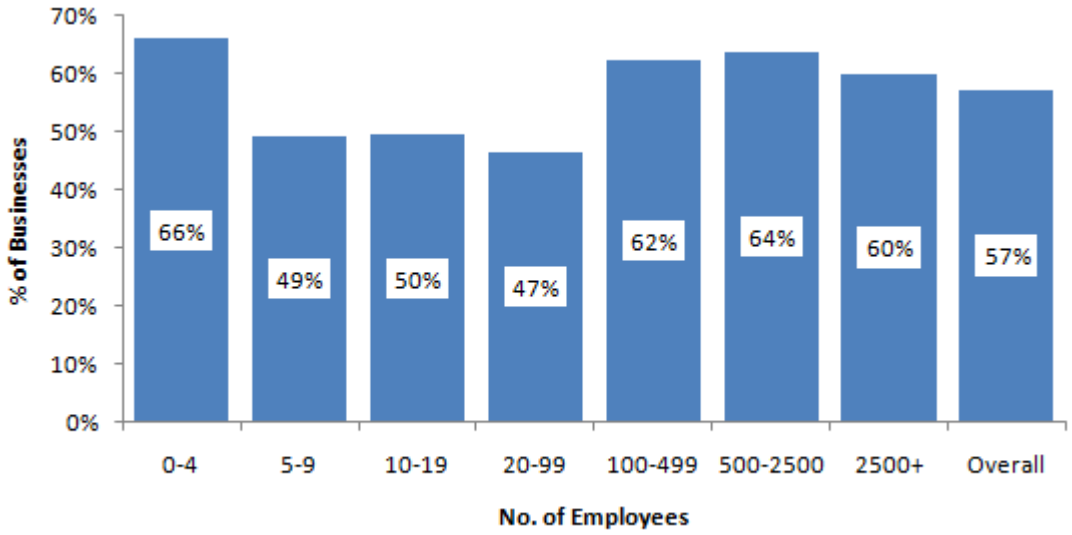
Additional evidence of the changing nature of work comes from the percentage of businesses that offer flex time as a benefit to their employees. Of the businesses surveyed, 57 percent reported allowing employees to keep flexible hours.

Businesses Offering Flex Time

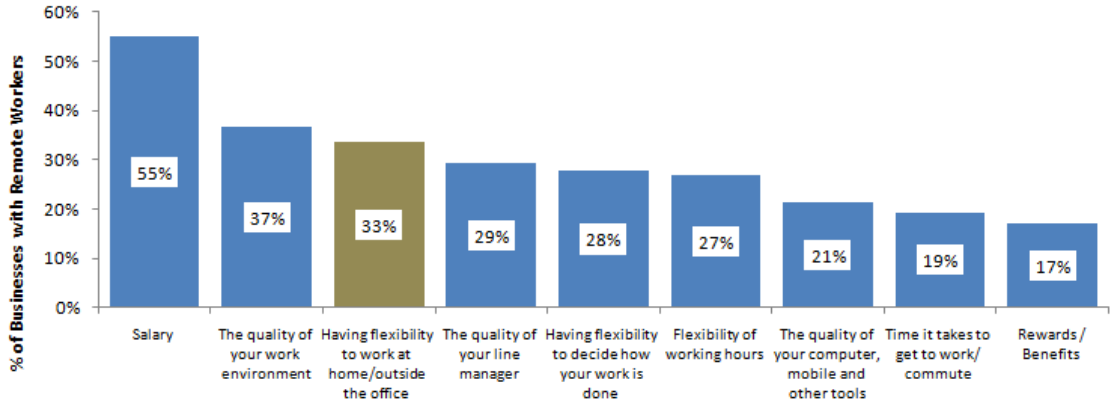


Source: GigaOM Pro

Flex Work — A Defining Feature of Future Workplaces

There are several reasons why companies now have formal or informal distributed work policies. The primary one is that those policies make up one of the top three determinants of job satisfaction — irrespective of business size. In fact, flex work is necessary to attract top-quality candidates. In other words, offering the ability to work flexibly has shifted: What was once considered a privilege for workers is now a necessary component for companies that want to be competitive in the marketplace.

Important Factors Determining Job Satisfaction



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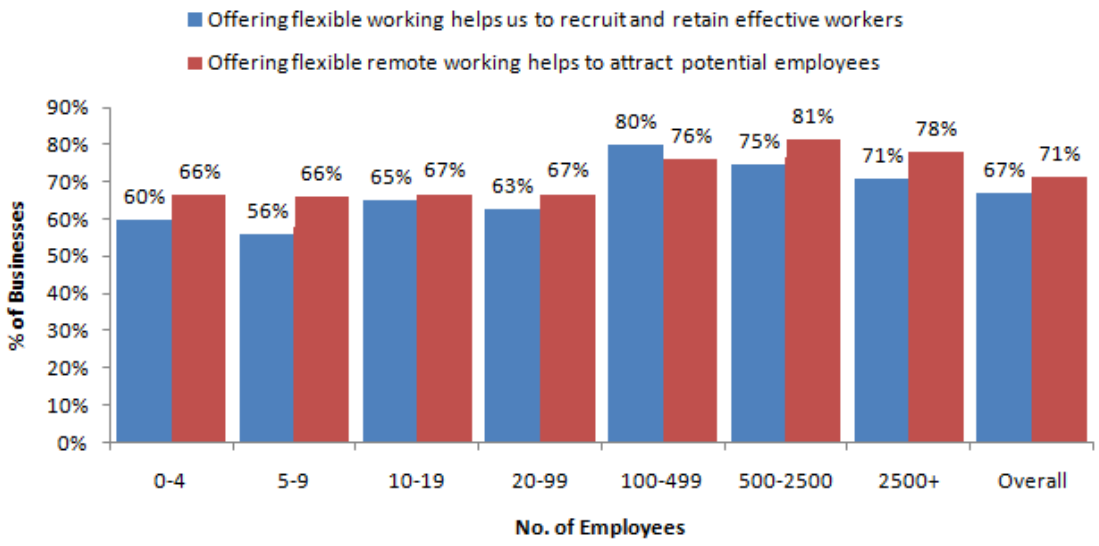
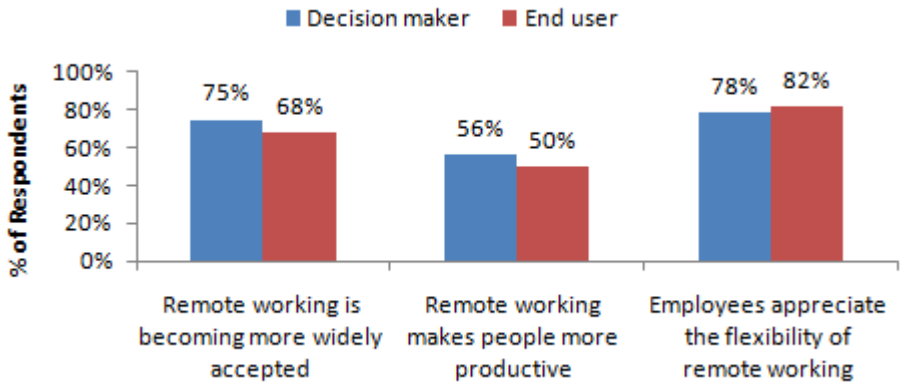
Flexible Work Policies Help Businesses Hire and Retain Quality Employees



Source: GigaOM Pro

Flex work is analogous to flexitime, which allows an employee to have a variable work schedule with a block of hours as the core schedule and the remaining as per the employee's discretion. Flexible work takes that concept a step further and allows an employee not only to have flexitime but also to telecommute, job share, temp/contract and even work as a freelancer. Flexible work and remote work go hand in hand. As flexible work helps businesses hire and retain quality employees, businesses' attitudes toward remote working have also changed over the years. Businesses now regard remote working positively regardless of size or type of business; those attitudes are similar regardless of whether the respondent was a decision maker or not. For example, 75 percent of decision makers believe that working remotely is now more widely accepted than before, as do nearly 68 percent of end users. Further, 56 percent of decision makers believe that working remotely makes employees more productive — a sentiment shared by nearly half of all end users as well.

Remote Work Becoming a Norm

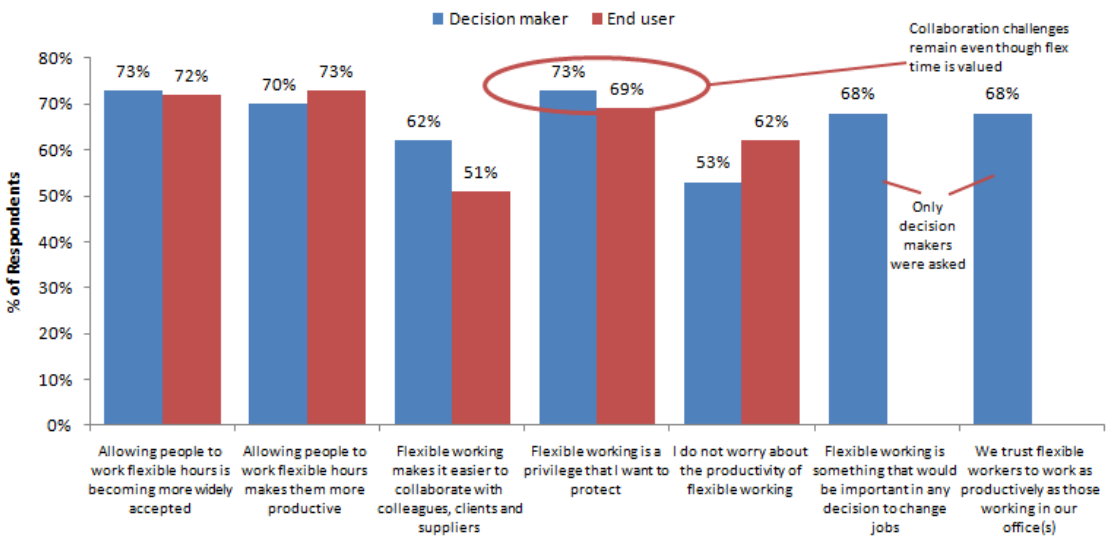


Source: GigaOM Pro

Remote work is not the only option valued by businesses. As shown previously, a number of businesses offer flex time to their employees. Attitudes toward having flex time are also positive, with over 70 percent of decision makers and end users believing that flex time is more widely accepted than before, and that it positively impacts worker productivity. However they do acknowledge that at times, flex time creates problems in collaborating effectively. That said, decision makers believe flex time to be an important benefit worth protecting, and they trust their employees to work productively despite occasional challenges in collaborating with colleagues. This suggests a need for training and education to use the tools available effectively and efficiently.

An interesting corollary can be drawn, that the future workplace will be built on "even more trust" than ever before — a trust between the business and the employee, a trust between the manager and the worker. This trust will be based on a confidence and faith that employees will not only do their jobs but will also use the available tools and technologies judiciously.

Flex Time Taking Root



Source: GigaOM Pro

Consumer Technology Accelerating New Work Styles

As mentioned earlier, several new technologies have emerged over the past decade that have been instrumental in supporting and driving new ways of working. It is the emergence of these specific technologies that have allowed businesses to source labor from around the world, extend business processes and effectively integrate business functions and workers in far-flung locations.

Disintermediation of IT

It is important to note that the adoption of these new technologies hasn't happened as a matter of policy from the get-go or as a result of conscious thought and foresight by the IT department. It has happened in stealth, with a few employees adopting and adapting these new technologies for work. The rogue use of certain technologies by a few workers in a small part of the organization has lead these businesses to establish

policies deploying the technologies to the wider organization once their benefits were evident. Eventually these technologies were recognized by enterprise ISVs and integrated into enterprise products.

Take the case of Chatter, developed by Salesforce (and recently augmented by the Dimdim acquisition). Salesforce recognized the growing use of social networking such as Facebook among workers and eventually developed features to support this new behavior. Chatter adds social networking features to its base CRM application. This disintermediation of IT due to the adoption of these technologies is an important aspect of the new way work is conducted.

The widespread availability of cloud services has empowered individual workers to bypass IT and use of services that would otherwise not be available or would take an enormous amount of time to be deployed. Box.net is a classic example of this: A simple file-sharing service with its easy-to-handle interface is used by millions of workers who do not need the complexity of enterprise-grade collaboration applications such as SharePoint.

Basecamp is another example of the above. This project-management application is a simple cloud-based service that suffices the needs of 80 percent of users.

And we can continue down the path with offerings such as Yammer and countless others, known and unknown, that are developing easy-to-use applications and deploying solutions that enable a worker to connect, collaborate, communicate, execute and be productive working from anywhere, anytime.

Opening of Extended Labor Markets and Worker Sourcing

Such technologies are aiding businesses in extending their workforce, in many cases globally, in a relatively simple and cost-effective manner. “Local” labor markets in

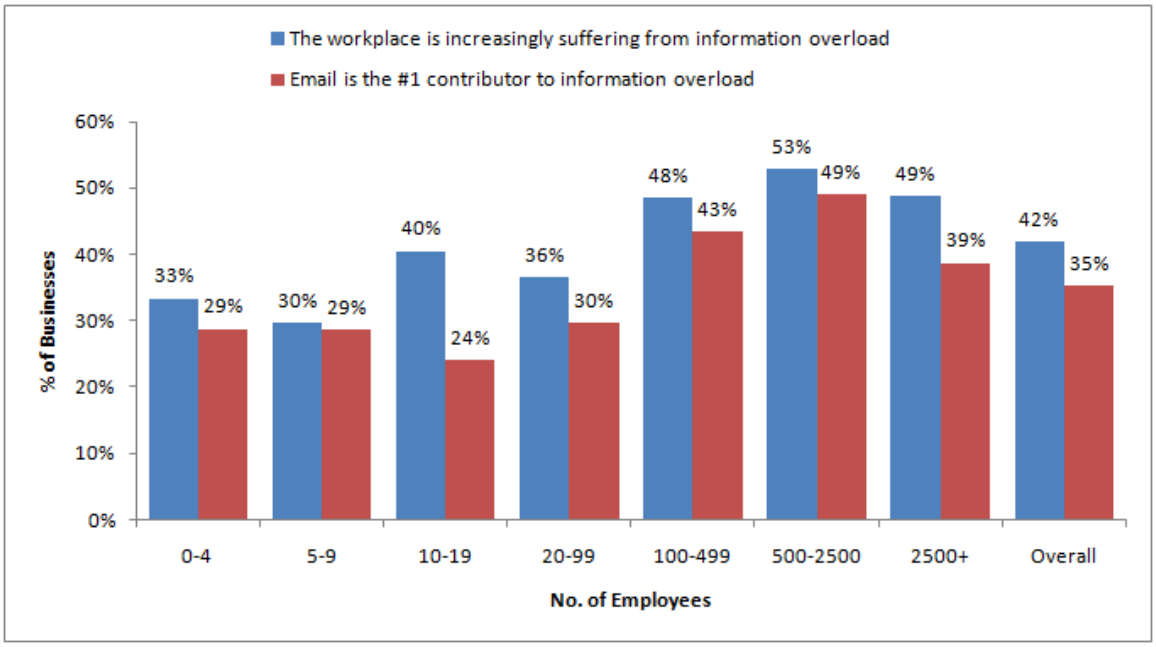
many cases are meaningless, as workers can collaborate from anywhere. This has far-reaching impact. Historically, businesses have concentrated in large part depending upon the availability and quality of the local workforce. That is why we see business clusters such as those found in Silicon Valley, which emerged as a result of a concentration of technical talent. This is changing, however, as sourcing such talent from another city or continent is as easy as sourcing talent locally.

What matters is that such talent be able to participate, collaborate and execute tasks using tools and applications that are available and operating at a consumer level.

Information Overload is Shredding Older Forms of Communication

Dissatisfaction with current information-management tools has also started to drive new ways of working. Workers seek alternatives when the current set of tools fails to make work easier or more efficient. Information overload is a symptom of our economy today, and tools such as email were intended to streamline communications and make them efficient. The reality is that workers are too often overwhelmed by the volume of information they have to deal with. Over 40 percent of respondents in the survey claim that the workplace suffers from information overload, and over a third state that email is the number one contributor to that. These views are particularly strong among workers in larger companies and among decision makers more than end users.

Information Overload Drives Workers to Seek Alternatives



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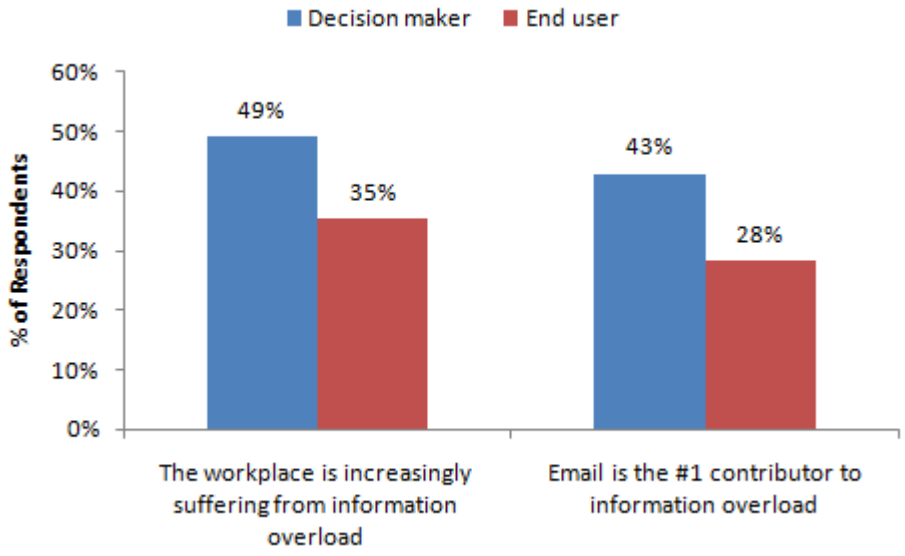
Information Overload Affects Both Decision Makers and End Users



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Decline of Legacy Technologies, Emergence of Consumer Technologies

Information overload and the failure of legacy technologies to manage such overloads are leading to their decline as new ways of working take hold. For example:

- Only 35 percent of workers expect to use email more in the future compared to last year.
- Similarly, the use of office landlines is also likely to decline.

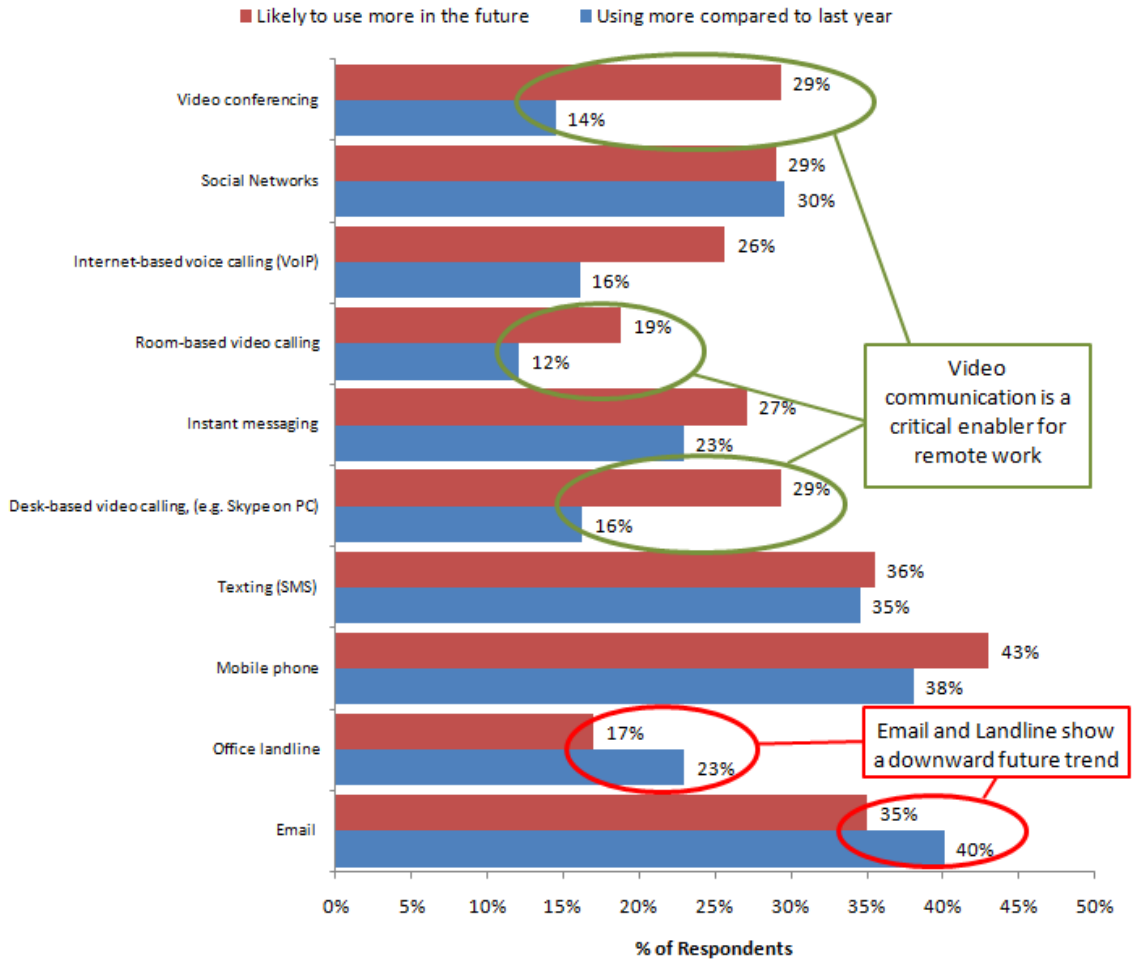
These two technologies have been a foundational communication system for close to two decades, but as the data shows, their effectiveness in managing work is declining. Increasingly, alternative forms of communication are:

- Texting

- Mobile phones
- Social networks
- Video communications
- Instant messaging/chat

All of the above started not at an enterprise level but within the homes of workers, employees, students, relatives, parents and colleagues.

Key Technologies: Future Use



Source: GigaOM Pro

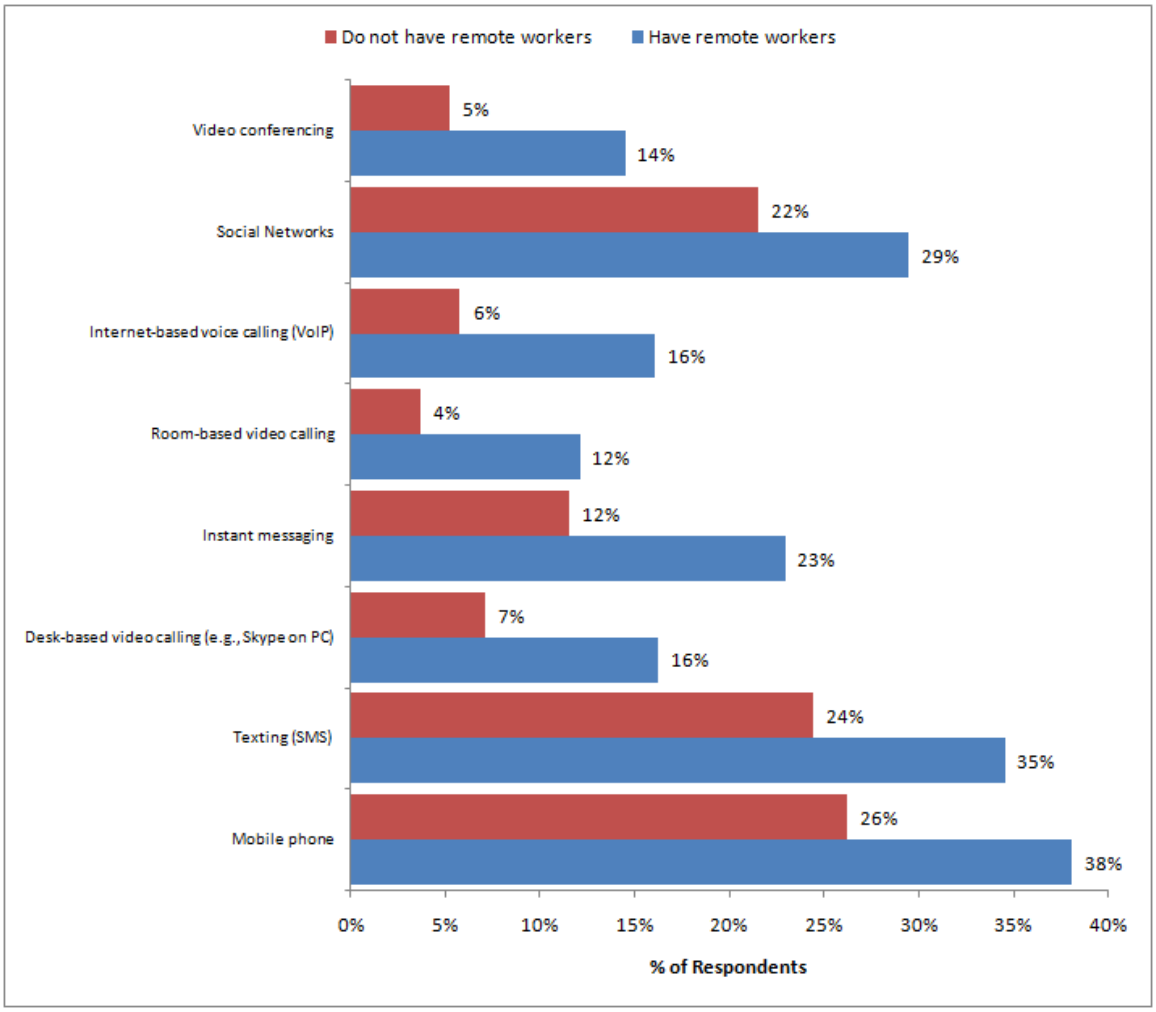
Technologies and applications such as Skype, Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer, smartphones and instant messaging are gaining ground not only within businesses but also increasingly outside of businesses, allowing clients partners and businesses to connect, collaborate and communicate.

The survey data shows just how much workers have come to rely on technologies such as smartphones, video-based communications and social networking. Businesses that

allow remote working exhibit significantly higher usage levels of the above technologies compared with businesses that do not allow working remotely. Note that it is not just mobile technologies that are being used more by remote workers. Desktop video calling, video conferencing and room-based video calling are used nearly twice as much by remote workers than by employees in businesses that do not allow remote working.

One would argue it's obvious that businesses allowing remote work will show a higher percentage of usage. However, the key point is that because of the availability and use of these simplistic technologies, there is a greater percentage of remote workers.

Use of Key Technologies Compared with the Previous Year



Source: GigaOM Pro

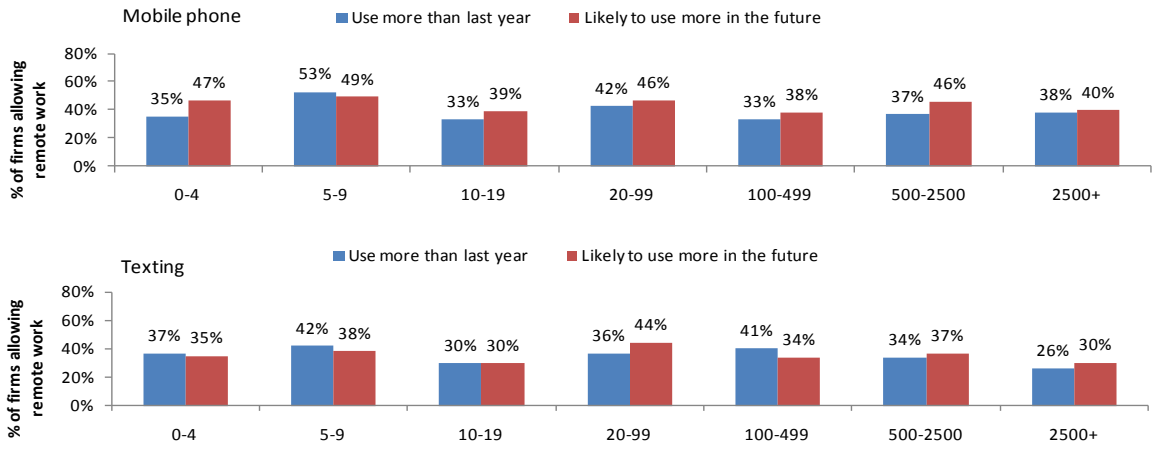
Going forward these remote workers anticipate relying even more on newer technologies to conduct their daily work, which is increasingly becoming collaborative. Once again, it is worth noting that technologies such as social networking, mobile phones and texting are being used outside the realm of traditional, centrally managed and authorized IT systems.

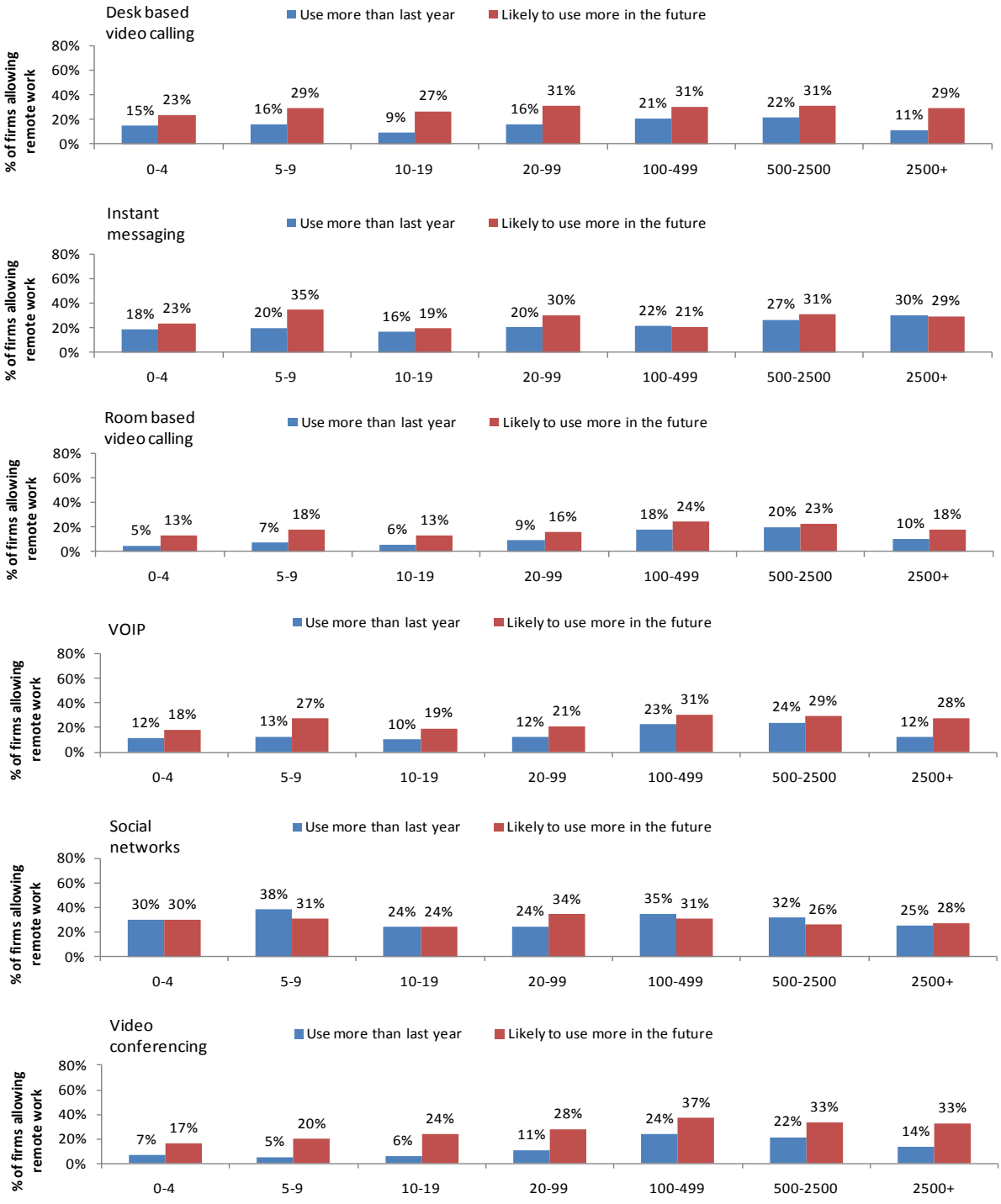
Communication is just one aspect; however, it has impacted and enabled new work styles:

- Traditional productivity applications that were controlled by IT are also being replaced with newer services that support and drive new work styles. Zipcast is a great example of this. Made by SlideShare, Zipcast is a service that allows individuals to create and share presentations and hold online meetings. There are no downloads, and as a cloud-based service it is completely outside the realm of IT.
- Desktop video is perhaps the best example of a consumer technology that has rapidly found its way into business. Services such as Skype offer an easy, no-cost way to connect face-to-face, making meetings more personable and effective. Indeed, we believe that video communications are likely to be central to new work styles, whether it is desktop-based video calling, room-based video calling or video conferencing systems. Consumer technologies such as FaceTime, from Apple, promise to do the same over mobile networks.
- On the hardware side, products such as the iPad, created specifically for the consumption of digital media by a consumer, are finding a place for business use, such as sales demos, business intelligence, presentations, emails, remote access to PC and web conferencing. They are also being adopted for line-of-business applications such as restaurant menus, banking and investment and car user guides and manuals.

Some interesting facts come to light when the same data is looked at by size of business. Video communication use is likely to increase across all business sizes. Even very small businesses anticipate using the more expensive room-based video communication systems. This bodes well first and foremost for Internet bandwidth providers, since high bandwidth is a core requirement. Second, video conferencing equipment manufacturers are likely to experience healthy demand in coming years.

Number of Firms Allowing Remote Work



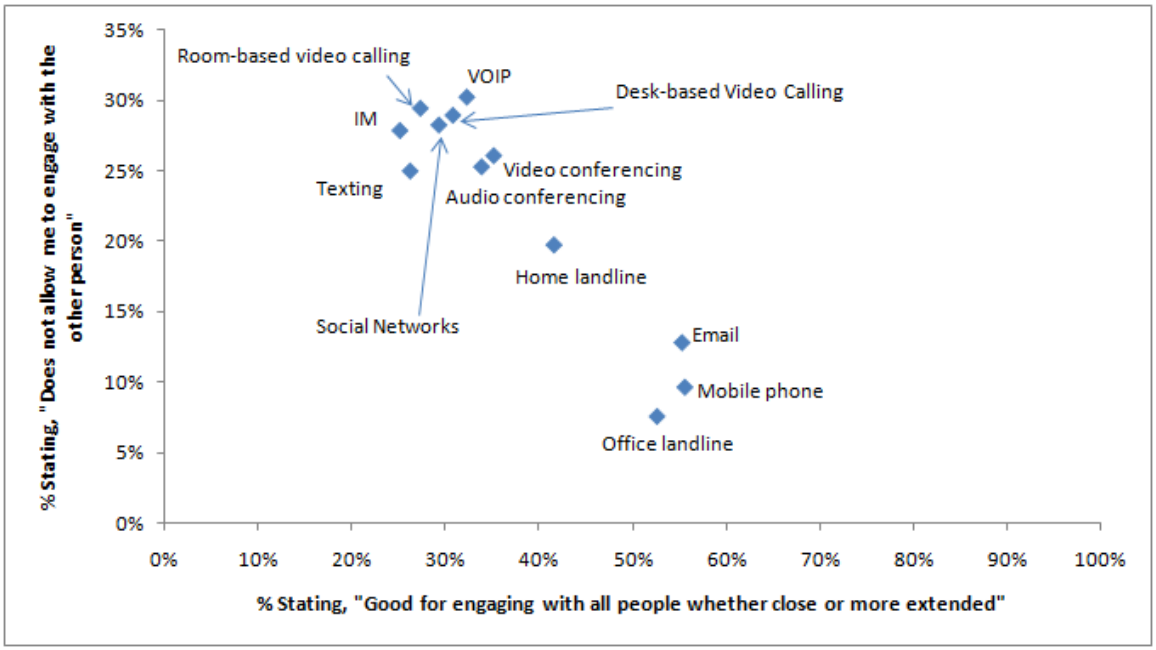


Source: GigaOM Pro

Video Communication is Becoming a Workplace Centerpiece

While employees who adopt new ways of working exhibit a greater use of newer technologies, their assessment of the effectiveness of these tools and technologies — specifically whether these technologies are effective for engaging with co-workers and others or not — suggests that a lot of improvement is needed. While mature technologies such as email and office landlines are deemed effective in this aspect, technologies such as video calling, video conferencing, social networks and texting are not rated as highly for communicating and engaging with other contacts.

Attitudes Toward Technologies



Source: GigaOM Pro

Video communication in particular needs improvement, because video has the power to alleviate concerns about being "present" or "showing up for work." It facilitates the face-to-face communication that is critical not just to collaboration but also to a sense of belonging to a workplace.

Although attitudes towards video calling are very positive, willingness to pay for services is low. Over 40 percent of all respondents believe video calling enhances communication between individuals. In general, employees in larger businesses are likely to view video calling more positively than employees in smaller businesses, especially as it relates to willingness to pay. Both small and large businesses agree that video calling needs to be available from a range of devices, and that they would like to conduct video calls for personal as well as business reasons. This last fact suggests the increasing "neutrality" of technology, in that people demand it be usable in consumer (personal) as well as business settings.

Attitudes Toward Video Calling by Employee Size (Agree + Strongly Agree)

	0–4	5–9	10–19	20–99	100–499	500–2500	2500+	Overall
Video calling enables richer, more productive relationships with colleagues, clients and suppliers	29%	29%	37%	38%	50%	57%	46%	42%
Video calling has saved us money	12%	9%	12%	18%	40%	42%	33%	25%
Video calling saves us time	20%	18%	26%	29%	41%	51%	42%	33%
Video calling needs to be available from a range of devices and locations—mobile phones and laptops as well as fixed systems	36%	36%	37%	47%	52%	54%	53%	46%
I am happy to pay for video calling	8%	5%	10%	9%	22%	29%	20%	15%
Video calling needs to be available for both business and personal calls	29%	29%	40%	35%	45%	45%	40%	38%
I would like to be able to video call family and friends when traveling away from home for work	41%	39%	47%	51%	57%	57%	49%	49%
Video calling allows me to collaborate better	22%	25%	26%	35%	45%	46%	42%	35%
I would only consider using video calling in business if it were free	47%	48%	45%	48%	42%	52%	49%	47%

Source: GigaOM Pro

Decision makers are generally more bullish on video calling than end users, and in some cases quite significantly. Business decision makers believe video calling saves

them money and time and facilitates richer, more-productive relationships. As a result, they are five times more likely to be willing to pay for video calling services and tools rather than end users. That said, both decision makers and end users would like to see video calling available on a range of devices.

Attitudes Toward Video Calling by Respondent Type (Agree + Strongly Agree)

	Decision maker	End user
Video calling enables richer, more-productive relationships with colleagues, clients and suppliers	53%	31%
Video calling has saved us money	35%	15%
Video calling saves us time	45%	22%
Video calling needs to be available from a range of devices and locations—mobile phones and laptops as well as fixed systems	56%	36%
I am happy to pay for video calling	26%	5%
Video calling needs to be available for both business and personal calls	48%	29%
I would like to be able to video call family and friends when traveling away from home for work	58%	41%
Video calling allows me to collaborate better	48%	23%
I would only consider using video calling in business if it were Free	50%	45%

Source: GigaOM Pro

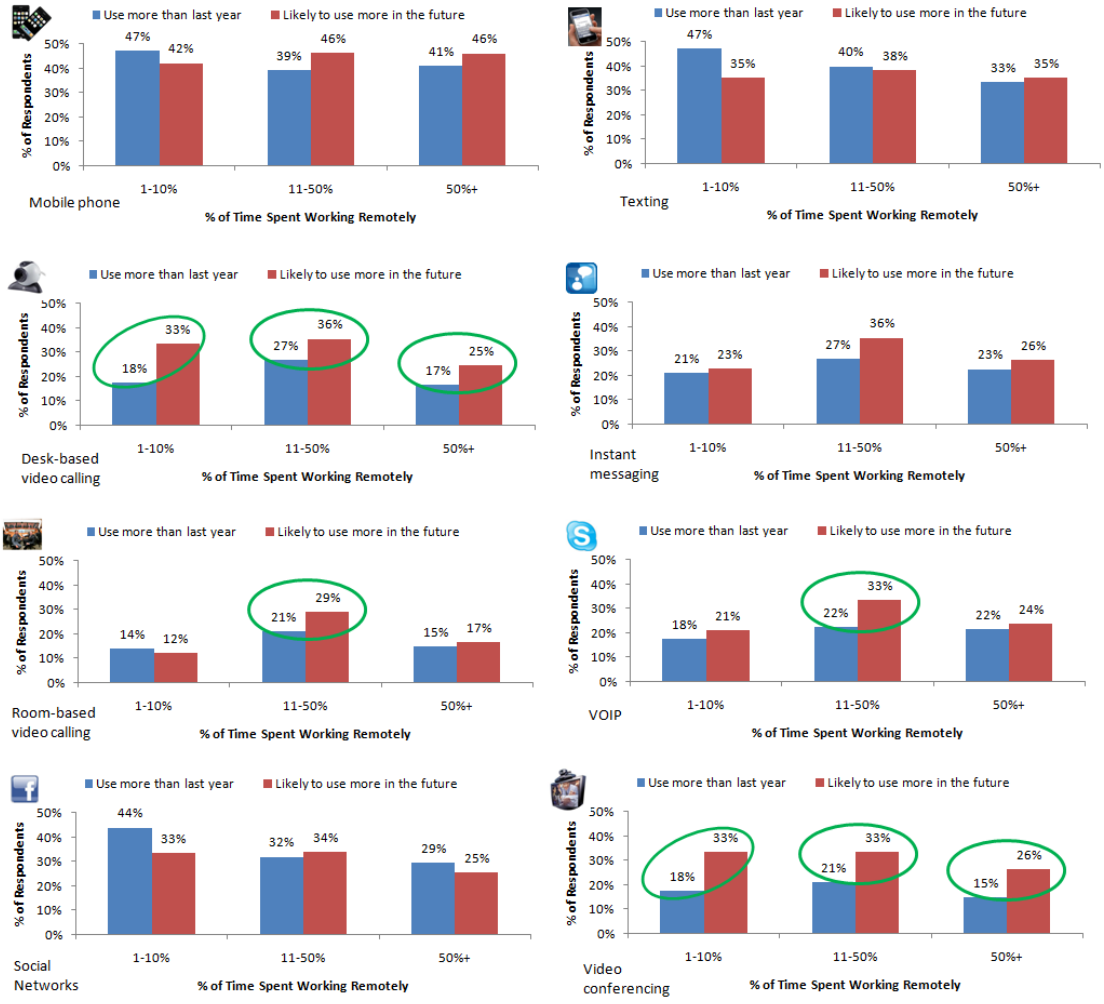
Emerging "New Worker" Persona

The data not only provides us a glimpse of the evolving nature of work but also points to the emerging persona of the "new worker," who is expected to work irrespective of location and time and is more adept at using technologies such as video communication, mobile phones and social networks to his or her advantage in getting work done. What is interesting is that the use of these technologies does *not* directly correlate with the amount of time spent working remotely. In other words, one cannot conclude that workers who work remotely most of the time are the heaviest users of these technologies.

In the following tables and charts, the data is segmented by the amount of time the respondent spent working remotely. It suggests that those who spent more than 10

percent, but less than 50 percent, of their time working remotely exhibit the highest usage of key technologies such as mobile phones, various forms of video communication and social networks. In specific cases, however, we also find that those spending only up to 10 percent of their time working remotely use certain technologies more than those spending more time.

Percentage of Time Spent Working Remotely



Source: GigaOM Pro

Specifically with regard to video communication, workers who spent between a tenth and a half of their time working remotely show positive opinions about the benefits of

video communications. They also exhibit a significantly higher willingness to pay for video communications.

Percent of Time Spent Working Remotely

	1–10%	11–50%	50%+
Video calling enables richer, more-productive relationships with colleagues, clients and suppliers	53%	68%	51%
Video calling has saved us money	37%	51%	30%
Video calling saves us time	39%	57%	45%
Video calling needs to be available from a range of devices and locations—mobile phones and laptops as well as fixed systems	60%	67%	53%
I am happy to pay for video calling	16%	41%	22%
Video calling needs to be available for both business and personal calls	51%	62%	46%
I would like to be able to video call family and friends when traveling away from home for work	61%	67%	55%
Video calling allows me to collaborate better	42%	61%	46%
I would only consider using video calling in business if it were free	51%	54%	49%

Source: GigaOM Pro

Additionally, the amount of time spent working remotely varies by job role. Those working the least amount of time remotely are likely to be in corporate strategy, accounting/finance or IT management roles, while those working remotely over half the time are in sales/marketing or service and support roles.

Percent of Time Spent Working Remotely

	1–10%	11–50%	50%+
Accounting/Finance	19%	7%	8%
Administrative/Clerical	13%	14%	7%
Corporate/Operations/Strategy	15%	11%	20%
Engineering/Design	6%	17%	7%
Human Resources	6%	6%	1%
Legal	6%	1%	1%
Manufacturing/Production/QA	4%	9%	7%
MIS/IT/EDP/Business Intelligence	15%	10%	7%
Purchasing	4%	3%	1%
Sales/Marketing/PR/Research	8%	10%	24%
Service/Support	4%	12%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: GigaOM Pro

Also, the profile of the modern worker is shifting as workers slowly become accustomed to easy-to-use, consumer-oriented web technologies; this is affecting change in the workplace, and the IT department is increasingly having to adjust, moving from a command-and-control dictatorship to a method that adopts usage of new technologies and deals with rogue implementations.

Conclusion

As it has in the past, technology continues to impact the way we live and work. Work as an act conducted by people is losing its dependence on time and place. Technologies such as video communication are making possible remote work scenarios while maintaining the benefits of face-to-face communications. Going forward we anticipate greater use of video communication along with fast-maturing technologies such as mobile phones and social networks. There remains, however, a lot of room for improvement with regard to the ability of these technologies to better facilitate engagement between individuals.

The advent of the Internet and various technologies described in this paper are changing the way people work. This impacts not only the workers themselves but also entire businesses, which can easily extend their search for talent globally as well as use technology-enabled processes to conduct operations effectively and empower workers across the enterprise.

The data underscores another important point, which is that nearly all these technologies first found their way into the hands of individuals (consumers) who then took these tools and technologies and applied them to a work setting. This is what we call the "consumerization of IT," or, simply put, the impact of consumer-oriented technologies on the way we work. Social networks, mobile phones and video communications are still evolving and have yet to hit maturity. As these technologies progress, we anticipate this consumerization of corporate IT to continue. It is imperative for vendors to realize this, for it impacts the way products are developed. Many vendors focus on solving technological challenges faced by enterprises, often treating a business as a single entity. To some extent this is valid, in that business policies influence IT decisions and choices, but vendors should realize that first and foremost, businesses are a collection of individuals. As businesses increasingly become collections of geographically dispersed individuals, a focus on making the individual (consumer) more productive will likely yield better products.

Business IT departments also have to alter to account for new work styles, changing attitudes and the behavior of new workers. They have to be more open and flexible with their policies and allow workers to use technologies that help execute tasks. As the line between consumer- and business-oriented technologies blurs, IT departments have to become more accepting of consumer technologies.

Further Reading

The Future of Work Platforms: An Overview

The enterprise collaboration space has entered an exciting new phase of collaboration. New software and applications are coming to market, as are new concepts for how to work and communicate in the knowledge age. From consumer-grade apps like those from Box.net and Huddle to software from long-established players like Microsoft and Oracle, these tools are taking collaboration technology past the traditional IT decision-making process and changing the way we approach the workday.

High-Impact Collaboration in the Enterprise

There is now a whole new world of collaboration tools available to enable what can best be termed "high-impact collaboration." These break-through tools — workspaces like Box.net, Huddle and Central Desktop or customer-powered support communities like Get Satisfaction — are made possible through the convergence of cloud computing, social software and the ubiquity of mobile technology. With these new technologies, employees can channel their passions and work together more effectively — regardless of where people are located — to accomplish their mission.

Top Remote Work Trends to Watch for in 2011

Driven by improvements in technology — and particularly by an explosion in the availability of mobile technology and increased access to broadband — the world of work is changing rapidly. From solving employer-employee trust issues through better communication to cultivating an increasingly mobile, cloud-based workforce, here are the top trends and key issues we found for the future of work in 2011.

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