

# Making Hybrid Work **Work**

How to Instill a Secure, Productive  
Culture of Collaboration



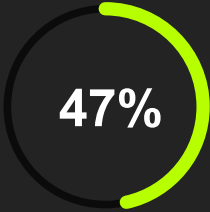
# Hybrid work is here to stay

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, companies were forced to transition to a hybrid working model as a temporary solution to social distancing protocols. Now, organizations have established - or begun to establish - permanent hybrid solutions within their work environment to accommodate the paradigm shift in perspective on how to work efficiently. Despite this shift, challenges within a hybrid model remain. Businesses with exclusively on-site work environments have built-in systems, social and technical, for ensuring a secure, productive and collaborative culture.

When it comes to building a successful hybrid landscape, however, 74% of managers say they don't have the influence or resources to make change for employees.<sup>1</sup>

Yet a hybrid workplace demands the solutions for optimizing productivity, collaboration, security and IT management that on-site workplaces come by organically. That concern over resources can lead to another challenge: prioritization. Limited resources may make it difficult to find equitable solutions to the key pillars of a successful hybrid landscape: productivity, collaboration, security and IT management. And it's critical that each pillar receives the same attention and resources as the others. When solutions are unbalanced, it can lead to a ripple effect of challenges. Poor security and IT management, for example, can make it difficult for on-site, hybrid and remote employees to collaborate. Likewise, low productivity amongst employees can make it more difficult to identify priority applications and streamline them effectively.

## Why go hybrid?



47%

of leaders are considering jobs not near their homes in the next year.



57%

of employees are likely to consider transitioning to hybrid work in the next year.



53%

of employees are more likely to prioritize health and wellbeing over work than before the pandemic.

<sup>1</sup> [Source](#)

**How do you solve for  
several hybrid challenges  
at once?**

**The answer lies in the  
applications you implement  
for your team.**

By streamlining the digital landscape of your organization with fewer, more efficient applications, you can much more easily promote and improve the key pillars of a successful hybrid workplace: productivity, collaboration, security and IT management.



# Fostering productivity for a more satisfied workforce

Productivity has a trickle-down effect, so it stands to reason a lack of it would too. Just as high productivity can lead to a better employee experience and positive business outcomes, low productivity can negatively impact employee wellbeing, retention and revenue.

## The Challenge

Like any problem, the first step to improving productivity is finding out what's disrupting it. While that may seem more difficult to root out in a hybrid environment, causes of low productivity are generally the same in any work situation.

Burnout, or the potential for it, is a major contributor to a drop in productivity: 48% of employees say they're already burned out at work.<sup>1</sup>

Part of the reason for this is a lack of clarity and purpose for employees. It's no longer enough to know what their job is; employees want to know the why of it too.

Regularly looping employees in on business goals and how they're contributing can help improve their sense of purpose, which in turn can lessen burnout and improve productivity.

## A difference in perspective <sup>2</sup>

While 85% of employees report being productive at work, only 12% of leaders have full confidence in their teams' productivity.

<sup>1,2</sup> [Source](#)

The causes of low productivity might be more nuanced in your organization. For example, the problem of productivity paranoia can impact how successful employees are.

Productivity paranoia comes down to a difference in perspective. While 85% of employees report being productive at work, only 12% of leaders have full confidence in their teams' productivity. As a result, employers may implement technology to track employee productivity. When workers don't understand why or how they're being tracked, they're likely to feel less trusted. This can lead to productivity theater - essentially, employees trying to look busy even when they aren't - and that results in less actual productivity. Another more subtle disruption of productivity arises from something that may have initially been designed as a solution: an explosion of digital applications.

An increased collection of technology tools may have been implemented when remote work became so prevalent in an effort to keep productivity, collaboration and security as robust as possible. Unfortunately, nearly half - 48% - of leaders believe the large number of applications and tools used in their organization is having a negative impact on employees' productivity.<sup>3</sup>

## The rise of digital tools <sup>4</sup>

78%

of executives say workers are using more digital tools and applications than before the pandemic.

66%

of employees are likely to consider transitioning to hybrid work in the next year.

48%

of employees are more likely to prioritize health and wellbeing over work than before the pandemic.

<sup>3,4</sup> Source



## The Solution

Now that hybrid work is a permanent fixture in many industries, organizations need efficient solutions to promote productivity for employees both on- and off-site. This starts with getting employees connected and collaborating easily, which then enables new, more effective work patterns that successfully engage and empower employees.

Applications optimized for the cloud are a primary way to ensure your employees can work efficiently wherever they are. Cloud connection grants every employee access to the same materials and resources. It also allows for easier collaboration, which shortens the time it takes for projects to be completed. Similarly, using applications that can be accessed across a variety of devices makes it easier for employees to do their work anywhere.

Implementing tools that grant employees access to personal insights into their own

productivity can also be useful. This data can help them personally improve work patterns, plan their day, and connect with the right people faster. Having agency over this information can help employees feel more engaged in their work and show the real value their contribution provides to business outcomes.

With integrated solutions like Microsoft 365, businesses can consolidate the applications they have in use and integrate more efficient ones into their day-to-day technology. Accessible from anywhere through cloud connection, Microsoft 365 connects all of your employees, wherever they work, creating an environment for higher productivity and collaboration within teams and across your organization.

Improved end user productivity with Microsoft 365 E3 can save users an average of 60 hours per year.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> [Source](#)

# Encouraging collaboration in a hybrid landscape

Collaboration is perhaps the one element of work culture that has suffered the most in the rise of hybrid environments. With employees working on- and off-site, often in different areas of the world, collaboration has fallen by the wayside as a priority. The problem is that, like when productivity suffers, a decrease in collaboration can have an adverse effect on other key pillars of successful work.

## The Challenge

While on-site employees, and even hybrid ones, have a fairly easy time staying connected, remote workers are struggling to feel included. Teams as a whole are also more siloed; some employees may be working on-site all or part of the time, while others could be fully remote. The impact of this separation doesn't fall solely on the workers off-site. On-site workers are also losing social capital as a result of their teammates no longer working alongside them physically.

## The impact of hybrid work on collaboration <sup>1</sup>

A donut chart with a blue outline and a dark blue fill, representing 43% of the total.

43%

of leaders say relationship-building is the biggest challenge in hybrid and remote work.

A donut chart with a blue outline and a dark blue fill, representing 55% of the total.

55%

of hybrid workers feel lonelier than before shifting to hybrid work.

A donut chart with a blue outline and a dark blue fill, representing 66% of the total.

66%

of employees feel like virtual hangouts are more of a chore than in-person gatherings.

<sup>1</sup> Source

## The Solution

Finding ways to be inclusive of all employees, regardless of location, doesn't have to be complicated. The key is building a culture of collaboration from a digital-first perspective. To foster collaboration, your organization needs digital tools that make it more efficient for employees to engage with each other and their mutual work. Having a digital-first culture of collaboration also helps employees stay in tune with the workings of the organization through online newsletters, highlighted projects and discussion forums.

Bringing meetings, chats and calls into one application lowers the amount of effort employees need to expend to attend events or feel included during collaborative sessions. Similarly, bringing documents and project management tools to the cloud lets employees work together in real time, all in one place. The benefit is less time spent doing more together, and the increase in productivity helps free up time for employees to build social capital and relationships with their team members and other colleagues.

By implementing an integrated solution like Microsoft 365, employees can make the most of their meeting times: meeting leaders can work with attendees before the event to collaborate on an agenda, join from any device during the meeting so everyone can be included, participate using features like digital whiteboards and shared notes and review recordings and transcripts after the meeting to make sure key action items weren't missed.

Microsoft 365 also gives employees the opportunity to store documents and shared projects on the cloud, with the option to work in the same document together in real time. Even if team members aren't available at the time, they can work offline and sync their contributions to the cloud when they're reconnected. The upshot is a well-connected team that feels engaged with their work and colleagues in a productive, collaborative and secure environment.



"[On Microsoft 365 E3] everything is easier. We can accommodate hybrid working models, we can collaborate in real time, and we use less email. We couldn't do all of this before."

IT Manager, manufacturing<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Source



# Making hybrid space more secure

When work spreads from an on-site space to include off-site team members, security becomes as much of a priority as it can be a challenge. Successfully securing a remote or hybrid environment requires combining a Zero Trust approach with the right tools and applications.

## The Challenge

The adoption of a digital-first culture of collaboration has its benefits, but it also typically means an influx of devices and networks that require security. The larger the hybrid or remote workforce, the more expansive the potential attack surface. This can be largely attributed to the increased number of endpoints due to bring-your-own-device policies, which

helps to expand the potential attack surface. The challenge is safeguarding the important aspects of technology that are subject to attack: identities, endpoints and information. This means a variety of policies and implementations have to be put to use, as each aspect requires a different type and level of protection to be totally secure.

## The Principles of Zero Trust? <sup>1</sup>

Verify Explicitly

Use least-privilege access

Assume breach

Minimize the blast radius

## Threats at a glance <sup>2</sup>

74%

Password attacks have risen approximately 74% in the last year.

93%

of ransomware incident response engagements revealed insufficient controls on privilege access and lateral movement.

100M

attacks against remote management devices were observed in May 2022 alone.

<sup>1</sup> Source <sup>2</sup> Source

## The Solution

Adopting a Zero Trust strategy may seem daunting, but the upside is that it can meet your organization where you are. It's not a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, it's built to be implemented in a way that prioritizes each individual organization's most pressing needs and resources available. It also works in conjunction with more standard and familiar security protocols like multifactor authentication and regular security patches.

Additionally, when you implement this strategy while using tools and applications intrinsically built to be more secure, you save on operational and personnel costs and energy needed to keep your technology protected. Microsoft 365 is a truly integrated solution, working within your existing network to enable collaboration and productivity while establishing a strong foundation of security and privacy. With a more advanced security stack, Microsoft can improve your organization's ability to not only prevent breaches and protect information, but also identify, investigate and remediate threats. Microsoft Information Protection (MIP) works specifically to ensure sensitive data is safeguarded, and a Zero Trust strategy can help reduce data breach risk by as much as 50% <sup>3</sup>.

These benefits extend to IT management, improving the productivity of administrators and reducing overall maintenance costs of technology, applications, tools and devices across an organization.

## Three steps to ensuring a secure digital landscape



**Adaptive access management:** Use multifactor authentication or passwordless authentication to explicitly verify the identity of the user.



**Protect, control and manage access to data:** Grant access to users on a limited basis using JIT/JEA (just-in-time and just-enough-access), risk-based adaptive policies and data protection.



**Assess security posture and block threats:** Get routine insights into the condition of your security measures, receive recommendations to improve them and access benchmark indicators.

<sup>3</sup> [Source](#)

# Manage devices and endpoints for a more effective digital landscape

Creating a more secure workforce is only part of the work of IT management. Managing a dramatic increase in endpoint devices, getting users connected and keeping them that way can take significantly more time in an era of increased hybrid and remote work options. The right digital tools can help mediate that, increasing the productivity of your IT team while reducing the cost of building hybrid operational excellence.

## The Challenge

Just a few years ago, IT administrators only had to worry about a couple of endpoints at most: a desktop computer and possibly a phone. With more employees working on a hybrid or remote model, as many as 50 percent of them are using a personal device for work.<sup>1</sup> Even without that number, endpoints have increased dramatically, including laptops, smartphones, tablets and devices used for conducting remote-enabled meetings. IT teams are tasked with deploying and managing new software for a larger number of devices and fielding help desk requests from employees in a wider geographical network. This impacts the amount of time they could be spending on tasks that more actively benefit business outcomes.

With the rise of BYOD—bring your own device—policies, IT professionals are confronted with the challenge of mitigating threats from applications they may not have had the opportunity to secure in advance. This is because organizations have, on average, over 200 work-related apps, many of which are not sanctioned by IT. Additionally, having these devices connected on cloud servers can result in fragmented solutions, which are more challenging for IT to secure and maintain.

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<sup>1</sup> Source <sup>2</sup> Source

## The Solution


Improving IT management productivity comes down to one key approach: simplification. Consolidating your applications and tools into one integrated solution allows you to optimize your IT team's time.

Microsoft 365 allows you to simplify technology management from centralized cloud portals. IT professionals can set up and manage users, endpoints, licenses and subscriptions, apps, system health and more from one unified place.

IT administrators can also configure user devices and maintain Microsoft and Windows solutions through automatic updates from the cloud.


This single solution, coupled with Microsoft's simplified adoption framework, provides visibility, recommendations and data that allow you to act effectively. The result is a more productive and efficient IT team and a more secure and collaborative workspace for every user.

## The real ROI of simplified IT management with Microsoft 365 E3<sup>3</sup>



**25%**

Reduce time spent deploying and managing new software by 25 percent



**75%**

Decrease endpoint configuration times by 75 percent

**\$79**

Save nearly \$79 per user over three years

<sup>3</sup> Source

# Why Microsoft 365 makes hybrid work work



A unified, integrated and cloud-based digital solution from Microsoft offers benefits both quantified and unquantified. Tighter security and more streamlined IT management provides very real ROI in terms of less money spent and more time saved. However, there is also the equally important benefit of an improved overall employee experience through increased productivity and collaboration.

Increased productivity and collaboration results in a more satisfied workforce, and employees who feel fulfilled by their jobs are more likely to stay. Just as important, employees who make better use of their time and work more effectively with their teammates have more time to spend with customers. This combats the negative impact of onboarding and hiring new employees on business results: The average cost per hire in 2022 was \$4,700<sup>1</sup>, with the time-to-value for new employees to reach their full potential averaging approximately 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

The clarity and purpose realized by improving productivity and fostering a culture of collaboration makes employees 4.5x more likely to be happy with their current company.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source <sup>2</sup> Source <sup>3</sup> Source

**57%** of employees are likely to consider transitioning to hybrid work in the next year.

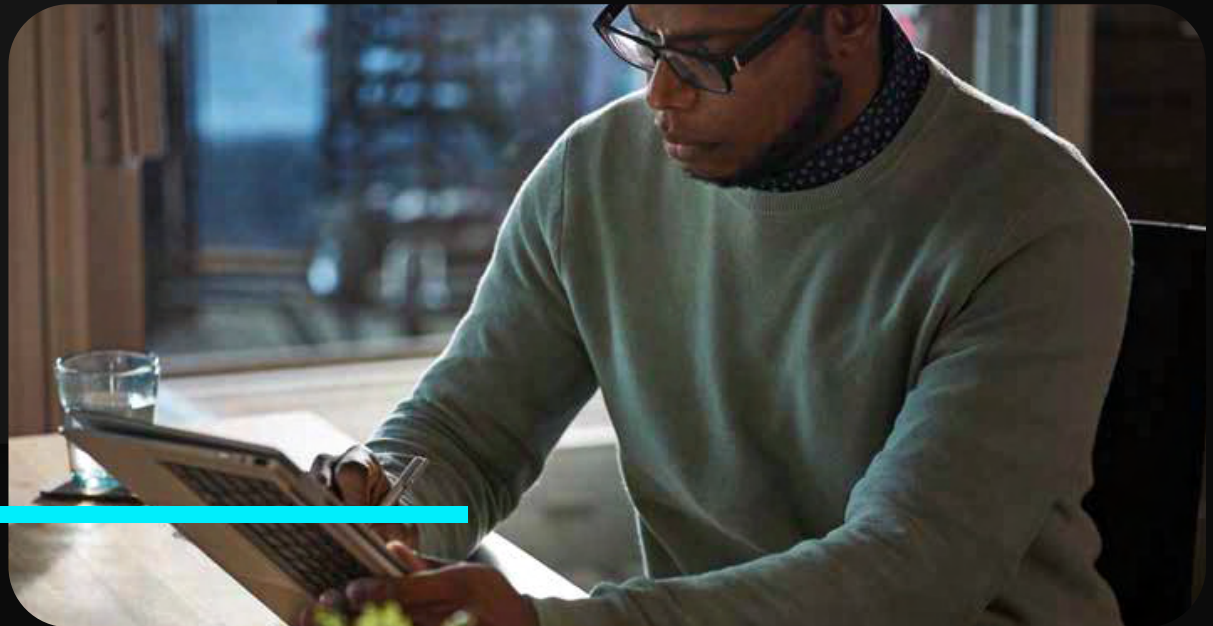
**60hr** Improved end user productivity with Microsoft 365 E3 can save users an average of 60 hours per year.

**50%** Zero Trust strategy can reduce data breach risk by as much as 50 percent.

**75%** Decrease endpoint configuration times by 75 percent.

**205%** Opportunity to decrease per user licensing spend by 60 percent, an average of \$55 per user per month, with an average ROI of 205 percent and payback in less than 3 months.

Knowing your company has a strong culture for productivity and collaboration, in conjunction with a secure and efficient digital landscape, helps you attract and retain top talent, which in turn benefits business outcomes and increases opportunity for revenue growth.







# Microsoft Teams Solutions from CallTower

*Dynamic and flexible communication solutions with scalability for today's growing business needs.*

As a Microsoft Gold and Solution Partner providing cloud voice solutions, CallTower's monitoring, and management services ensure the highest quality user experience. Globally, CallTower is one of few organizations certified to provide voice with Microsoft Teams.

## CallTower's Operator Connect For Microsoft Teams

Operator Connect delivers PSTN access to Microsoft Teams users, to deliver an enhanced customer experience. Operator Connect allows Microsoft Teams administrators to open the "Operators" tab in the Teams admin center to connect calling services, acquire phone numbers, and assign users. Operators, such as CallTower, provide technical support and manage the voice network and infrastructure. Operators can also enable PSTN voice services in regions currently unavailable through Microsoft Calling Plans. Implementation of voice services can be online in a matter of hours.



# Operator Connect Benefits

## Leverage Existing Contracts or Find a New Operator

You keep your preferred operator and contracts or choose a new one from a selection of participating operators to meet your business needs.

## Faster, Easier Deployment

You can quickly connect to your operator and assign phone numbers to users — all from the Teams Admin Center.

## Enhanced Support And Reliability

Operators provide technical support and shared service level agreements to improve support service, while direct peering powered by Azure creates a one-to-one network connection for enhanced reliability.

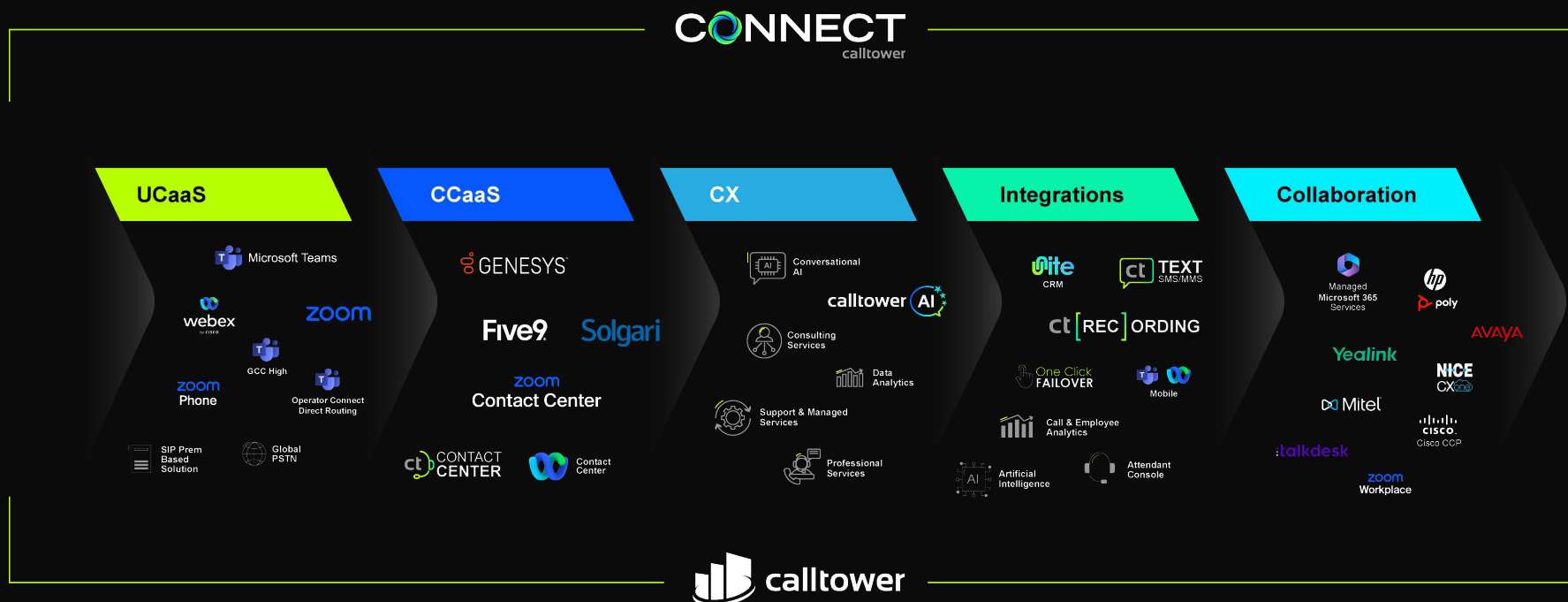
## Operator-Managed Infrastructure

Your operator manages the PSTN calling services and Session Border Controllers (SBCs), allowing you to save on hardware purchase and management.

# CallTower's Native Microsoft Teams Direct Routing

CallTower delivers an integrated Office 365 Microsoft Teams experience with global calling plans empowered by a world-class client services team, ensuring a personalized implementation, adoption, training and support strategy.

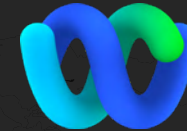
The Microsoft Teams Phone System powered by CallTower enables customers to bring their current voice services into the Microsoft Cloud through Direct Routing. Direct Routing ensures the ability to leverage CallTower's preferred rates and unlocks the full potential of a Microsoft Teams Phone System. CallTower delivers key Microsoft Teams UCaaS features and functionality which are unavailable through other providers. Customers using CallTower's Teams Direct Routing offering can also easily redirect calls to an alternate number in case of a Microsoft outage and stay connected.



CallTower is in a **UNIQUE** position in the marketplace  
delivering industry-leading



zoom



Empowered by **25+** Key Business Integrations

Providing an environment where these solutions can work together – enabling customers with a choice (down to the user level) and keeping the internal calls between these platforms on-net enabling additional cost savings.

**These solutions are all provisioned through CallTower Connect, our proprietary provisioning portal.**

**Let's Connect**