

White Paper:

# Modernizing Meetings: The Ultimate Guide to Conference Room Technology



# Changing Workplace Dynamics

Top organizations around the world are reconfiguring their workspaces because so many of their employees are mobile and remote for at least half of their workdays.

Some of the changes in the conference room landscape stems from equipment upgrades, but the real story behind conference and meeting room modernization is a sea change in how people and companies work today.

First, a lot of meetings now include remote participants — those who work part-time at home or others who are based full-time from their home or small satellite offices. Research shows as many as 90 percent of U.S. office workers would prefer to telecommute.

The population of work-at-home company staff has grown by 115 percent since 2005, notes Global Workplace Analytics.

UK-based Workplace Insights noted that many desks are only occupied an average 44 percent of the time. The upshot is that offices are becoming more dynamic, as people move around the environment more and engage in a variety of smaller conversations and informal meetings.

Second, many meetings have changed and become increasingly collaborative environments where attendees are encouraged to pitch, work through problems and generate ideas. There's a growing recognition that meetings consume at least 15 percent of a company's collective working hours, rising to an average of 40 percent for senior executives. Technology needs to keep pace with these considerations and enable productive, collaborative and efficient meetings. In addition, technology can help ensure that meeting decisions and outcomes are recorded.

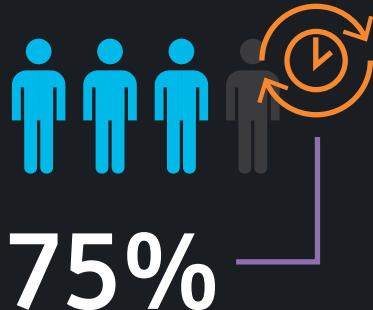
Third, meetings are smaller, less structured and often impromptu. The fixed weekly meeting is far from gone, but as workforces grow younger and work styles evolve, meetings now often begin organically as groups get pulled together to huddle and talk.

## Changing Work Styles



Highlights from a 2017 global survey of 25,000-plus workers

Source: The Human Face of Remote Working



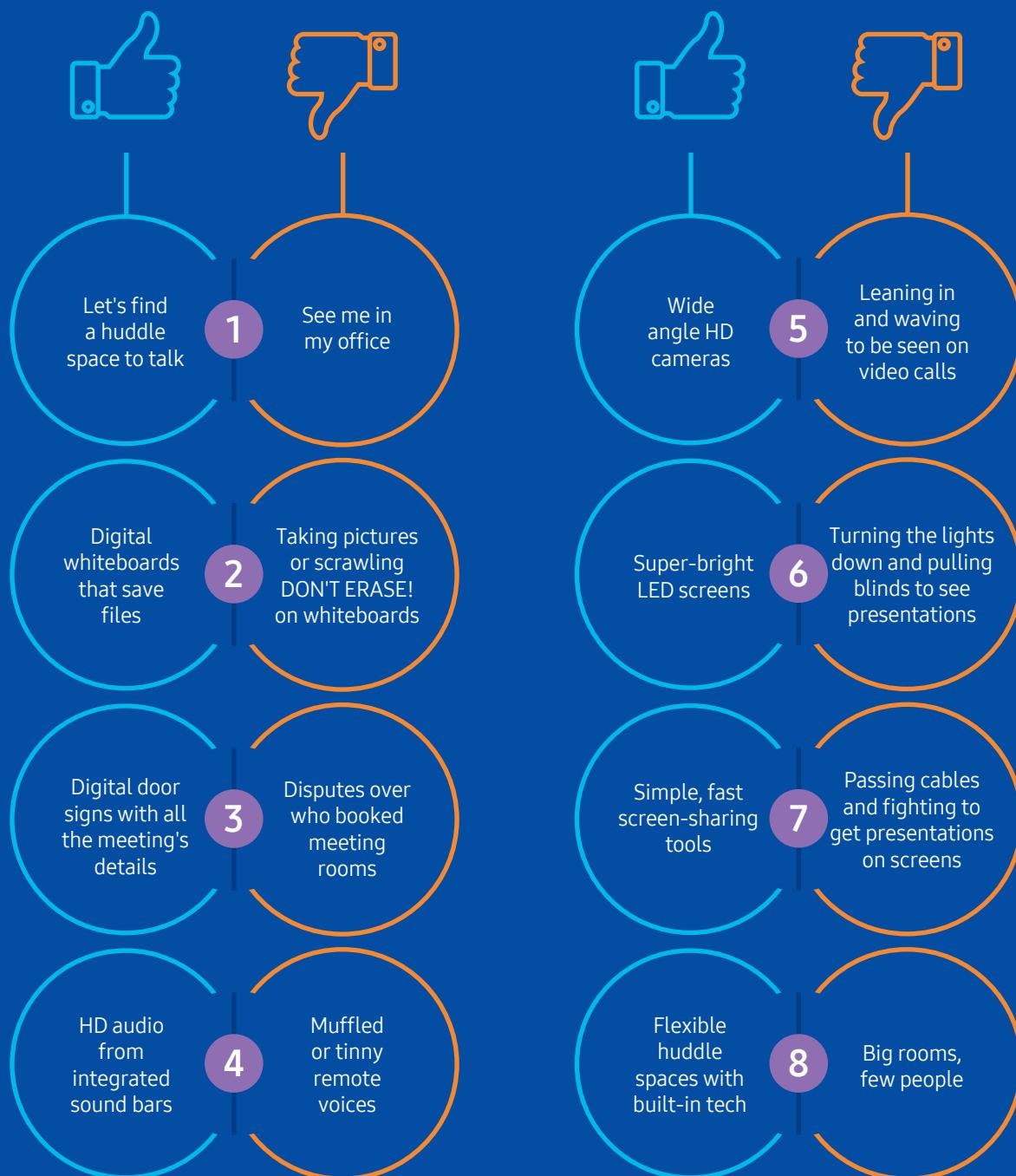
Nearly 3 out of every 4 employees say their company offers flexible work arrangements, and 32% say they regularly work remotely.



95%

of those surveyed use collaboration technology to connect with co-workers, and more than a third use it multiple times a day.

# Meeting Room Tech: What's In and What's Out



# Emerging Technology for Workplaces

Modern meeting room technology greatly improves the meeting experience. Agile spaces leverage technologies that allow staff to connect and interact with their colleagues.

You'll know your meeting spaces are due for an upgrade if you look around and see projectors on the table or hanging from the ceiling, projection screens on walls, whiteboards, flip charts and a giant conferencing phone everyone needs to share during a conference call. There will also typically be a lot of cables running every which way, bins of marker pens and handfuls of orphaned remote controls.

Modern meeting room technology cleans all that up and greatly improves the meeting experience for everyone involved, whether they're right in the office or at home office desk three time zones away.

The contemporary term for these new spaces is agile — the idea that the office is malleable and ready for activity-based work, as opposed to tasks specifically done at desks and in offices. Agile spaces leverage technologies that allow staff to connect and interact with their colleagues — whether that's in a planned meeting, or an informal, impromptu discussion. Here are some of the key technologies used in the modern meeting room:

**Collaborative Displays:** These are whiteboards on steroids — interactive displays that allow small groups to brainstorm or flesh out plans, with styluses and fingertips replacing ink markers. With new solutions such as Samsung Flip, content can be shared straight from your smartphone, as well as a laptop or USB drive. The Flip solution is also portable, with an optional easel stand that can be wheeled from one space to another. Meeting outcomes can easily be saved and shared, so no one ever needs to pull out their phone at the end of a meeting to take a photo of what's scrawled on the whiteboard.

**Video Conferencing:** Video conferencing technology has become increasingly affordable and should now be a standard feature in mid- to large-sized meeting rooms. Rather than viewing video conferencing as an add-on to existing meeting room technology, today's bundled solutions featuring large-format displays, video conferencing soundbars and collaboration systems offer a reliable, turnkey approach. Samsung and HARMAN offer a range of Huddle Space solutions for meeting rooms of different sizes. While a standard bundle pairs a microphone and camera with an LCD display to enable presentations and remote participation, premium and enterprise versions layer in high quality audio, dedicated sharing devices and interactivity.

**Sensors:** Different types of IoT sensors can dim or shut off lights when rooms are unoccupied, then turn on when someone enters. This saves on energy usage, while more sophisticated sensors tied to software can even activate equipment and screens for the people who booked the room when they arrive. To optimize planning, the sensors can also provide overall analytics on room usage.

**Digital Meeting Room Displays:** Small displays mounted immediately outside meeting room doors are now mapped to scheduling or calendar systems to indicate whether that specific room has been booked, by whom and for what period. Many systems allow users to use a touchscreen to find another available room, or book that room for another time window. LED light bars allow people to see if a room is free or booked across an open-plan office. Booking systems also provide data on room utilization — which tends to be lower than generally perceived. In fact, Workplace Insights says average meeting room occupancy across 24 organizations showed a utilization rate of only 38 percent, though the office perception is often that the rooms are never available.

## Huddle Rooms Everywhere

50M



Wainhouse Research estimates there are already as many as 50 million huddle rooms globally, but the vast majority of huddle rooms have little or no technology in place.



## 8 Clues That It's Upgrade Time For Your Meeting Room



The overhead projector on a cart in the corner



Tangles of connector cables and power bars



"DON'T ERASE!!!" scribbled on a note-filled whiteboard



It's easier to huddle around one laptop than try to get it on the projection screen



On conference calls, remote workers have to open e-mailed presentations to follow along



Presentation up, means lights out



Meetings are often interrupted by someone dipping in and asking, "When do you have this room until?"



Remote participants look and sound like they're calling in from Mars

**4K Displays:** Much of the buzz around 4K displays revolves around the quality of entertainment and gaming visuals, but the incredible pixel density of a 4K resolution display also provides extremely high-level detail for varied applications. These capabilities appeal to a variety of applications, such as product developers showing off new designs and imaging for industries like healthcare and energy exploration. The latest displays also offer brightness and contrast levels that allow everyone to see the screen even under high ambient light conditions.

**Direct-view LED:** Larger conference rooms and corporate presentation theaters need and want very large digital canvases for audiences that may be in theater-style seating. Fine-pitch LED displays offer the high resolution needed for these settings, but also offer three critical benefits: They're bright enough that lights don't even need to be dimmed for presentations, they have no seams (unlike LCD video walls), and presenters can walk in front of the screen without casting projection shadows or being blinded by the projector lamp.

**Wide-Angle and 360 HD Cameras:** HD quality cameras end the "fish-eye" camera experience and give remote participants a far more natural view of the main meeting room and the people there. Cameras on pivots can automatically look for and pan to speakers in a meeting setting for the benefit of people viewing remotely. Some systems make controls available, via software, to those remote viewers. Other camera/microphone gadgets have multiple camera lenses to capture 360 degree views and auto-focus on the person speaking.

**HD Audio:** Tinny telephone speakers and limited range microphones are being supplanted by HD audio systems that end the days of coworkers yelling into the mic to be heard and struggling to hear what remote participants are saying. Harman has created speaker bars for meeting room settings that use Sound By JBL, the same hardware employed in high-end commercial and residential audio speakers.

**Wireless Tools:** Passing around cables and looking for adapters that will make various laptops play nice with a display or projector becomes a thing of the past once a wireless presentation solution is in place. Wi-Fi takes the place of cables, and sharing is as simple as a button click. Wireless technology can also tidy up meeting spaces through charging pads integrated right into tabletops.

# Benefit from Your Workspace Modernization

Upgrading workplace meeting technology has budget implications, but modernization efforts have some clear benefits to operating budgets, as well as some less-obvious but still tangible cost reductions.

**Space:** Commercial real estate giant CBRE's 2017 Office Fit-Out Cost Guide says the average cost per office employee seat is \$32,103 annually, so just finding ways to make working remotely feasible and effective for four staffers can save approximately \$128,000 per year.<sup>9</sup> Analytics generated by meeting room systems, such as room booking, can help right-size the amount and type of space needed for offices. This brings enormous cost savings implications, especially with the 2016 average annual office space cost ranging from \$59 to \$223 per rentable square foot.

**Time:** Meeting leaders or assistants often turn up 15-30 minutes early to meetings, just to ensure the right equipment is there and everything is working. Modern systems are largely plug and play. Staff don't need to cross the city or even an office campus to get to meetings when virtual meetings allow the face-time, video and audio quality, and collaborative tools that make staying put just as feasible.

**Resources and Productivity:** Larger organizations with dozens of meeting rooms have IT or A/V staff who spend their days running around getting projectors to cooperate with laptops, wheeling around displays and scrambling to find and provide adapter and signal cables.

