INTRODUCTION

Working from home has increased three-fold[1] since the global pandemic, forever changing the way organizations look at conducting business.

The next normal is upon us and organizations are being pushed into re-thinking their business model for a post-pandemic world. For IT departments, this means driving the adoption of new technology to boost productivity and collaboration no matter what approach is taken. Offices and home workspaces must also be prepared and equipped to maintain employee safety, as well as a feeling of connectivity.

As a result, the use of video has quickly emerged as a business critical tool that's now at the heart of many business model strategies.

In the month of March 2020 alone, total video calls in Microsoft Teams grew by over 1,000%[2] while Zoom customer numbers grew by 354% YoY[3].

Not only has video collaboration become the de facto standard for enabling face-to-face teamwork at a distance; it is key to driving engagement, productivity, and efficiency.

RETURN TO WORK SCENARIOS

Organizations are preparing for their next normal – which may include a majority of employees returning to the workplace, a strategy to continue remote working, or a hybrid mix of the two. Each approach requires careful planning, and for a smooth transition it's important to provide employees with the right tools and support for the next normal strategy selected.

SCENARIO 1:
WORK FROM HOME

Home workspaces will vary from employee to employee. In the context of pre-pandemic WFH environments compared to the current environment, household distractions and changes in personal routine, health and emotions, are the two main homeworking areas that appear to have been affected[4].

Prioritize wellbeing by providing guidance on optimal personal workspace set-up, sharing remote work best practices, and ensuring staff have the tools they need to stay connected and engaged.

IT TIP

Consider surveying employees to understand what they need to be productive and collaborative in their new environment. For those working from home, would an Active Noise Cancellation headset with advanced noise canceling microphone help keep them focused while eliminating background noise? Or would they benefit from guidance on taking regular screen breaks to maintain wellbeing and focus? Head over to **Logitech's WFH Employee Survey** for more ideas on how to gather valuable feedback from employees.

SCENARIO 2:
RETURN TO OFFICE

74% OF LOGITECH'S CUSTOMERS SAY THE "OPEN OFFICE" IS STILL RELEVANT WHEN THINKING ABOUT THE NEXT NORMAL[5].

Adequate spacing between desks, staff reminders to clean IT equipment daily, and sanitizing stations at high touch spaces such as printing areas, will be crucial to maintain hygiene standards. Developing a video-first culture is business critical to ensure employees stay connected as they phase back to the office. Equip meeting rooms of all sizes for video conferencing to keep team members connected, while ensuring enough chairs are removed to maintain social distancing.

IT TIP

Are you able to control how many employees are in one meeting room at any given time? Tools like Logitech Sync provide insights into room utilization and occupancy. Armed with this knowledge you can support social distancing by counting how many people are in a room and optimize space by seeing if rooms are being over or under-utilized.

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SCENARIO 3:
THE HYBRID APPROACH

RECENT RESEARCH REVEALS THAT ORGANIZATIONS WITH REMOTE WORK OPTIONS HAVE THE HIGHEST EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OVER THOSE WITH NO REMOTE OPTIONS OR THOSE WITH A 100% REMOTE WORKFORCE[6].

Should you decide this hybrid approach is right for your organization, combine considerations from scenario 1 and 2. Work with business and department leaders to recommend maximum staff capacity numbers and timelines for a phased approach to help facilitate a safe return to the workplace.

IT TIP

Face-to-face communication plays a crucial role in maintaining a feeling of connectivity - even if virtual. With 78% of employees[7] surveyed by Logitech favoring video conferencing over audio, re-configuring meeting rooms with the right video tools will enable office staff to better connect and collaborate with remote workers.

PLANNING THE TRANSITION

Organizations are preparing for their next normal – which may include a majority of employees returning to the workplace, a strategy to continue remote working, or a hybrid mix of the two.

Each approach requires careful planning, and for a smooth transition it's important to provide employees with the right tools and support for the next normal strategy selected.

1. MAINTAIN WHAT STAYS THE SAME

Talk to your employees, find out what's working and therefore, what needs to stay the same. Although things like customer service delivery, communication, and collaboration must remain consistent, the way in which you help facilitate this through the use of technology will change. Consider:

1. CONNECTIVITY

Wherever staff are based, they must stay connected. This means providing them with collaboration and productivity tools so they can perform their best work wherever they are.

2. MEETING SPACES

Your business will still require meeting spaces such as conference rooms, where disparate colleagues and departments can connect and collaborate.

3. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

The ability to deliver a highly personalized customer service has never been more paramount. To stay competitive and maintain customer confidence in your brand, communication must remain human and ultra-personalized by leveraging the right tools.

IT TIP

Over a third of Logitech's customers say they'll need more video rooms in the office to support the increase in remote employee collaboration[8]. Equipping all rooms – regardless of size – with video capability gives employees more flexibility to connect. In doing so you can make better use of your office space, and lift limitations on where work can happen.

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2. ADAPT
WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Large meetings in one room could be a thing of the past. Over the next 12 months and beyond, IT will play a key role in transforming large meeting spaces into smaller rooms.

The way staff work together in offices must also change. This will be focused around new health and hygiene requirements, and includes leveraging the right tools to drive collaboration and engagement in a safe way.

1. MEETING ROOM SET-UP

Support your hybrid workforce by ensuring small and medium-sized meeting rooms that were not previously equipped are fully video enabled, to allow for face-to-face virtual connections with team members and customers.

IT TIP
Make the meeting room experience safer by reducing the number of touches required for setting up and running a meeting. Consider tools such as contactless collaboration when used with **Alexa for Business for Zoom Rooms**, to enable employees to start a conference using voice command.

2. TOOLS FOR REMOTE WORKERS

90% of staff say they now feel trusted by their managers to work remotely[9]. Employees who have proven their roles can be done remotely – such as marketing and customer services – must have the right tools to perform their jobs.

IT TIP
Develop work from home kits that include a mixture of solutions based on the employee's role within the organization. Include tools to support healthy working habits, like an ergonomic mouse and keyboard, as well as headsets and webcams for those in roles where they need to collaborate remotely with colleagues and customers.

3. HOT-DESKING POLICIES

Health and hygiene will now dictate many changes in the office. New measures must be taken to ensure your staff can continue to work flexibly while maintaining social distancing and safety standards.

IT TIP
Prepare collaboration and productivity packs that can be used by hot-deskers to collect from a locker or pickup point in the office. Include tools such as a wireless keyboard and mouse, and a headset that are specifically allocated to and used by that worker only.

3. INNOVATE WHAT'S NEW?

To keep pace with the next normal, meet customer demand, and stay competitive, your organization must continue to evolve. When it comes to innovation, here are several developments to consider:

1. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT METHODS
Departments such as sales or customer services may be unfamiliar with using video. To ensure they meet changing customer expectations, all employees – regardless of their tech capabilities - must be equipped and ready for new, virtual ways of engaging with customers.

2. ROOM ANALYTICS
With machine learning technology that's able to detect if people are too close together, IT can quickly identify proximity compromises to alert HR and facilities, all to keep the workforce safe.

3. IN-COUNTRY COLLABORATION LEADS
This innovative approach is being adopted by organizations to provide support to the IT Team. Video collaboration super users are identified and certified to become the collaboration lead for their team, department, or country.

IT TIP

From digital kiosks that check body temperature to automated conference room solutions with one-touch connectivity, new technology requires users to be ready for change. Even though the need to visually communicate in a video-first world is becoming more prevalent, adoption issues will still occur. When choosing which solution is right for your organization, always consider integration capabilities, set-up requirements, and any training needed – as well as the digital capabilities of your workforce.

"These times we're living in are as exciting as they are challenging. Already we're seeing the market adapting, and technology that once sounded futuristic could very soon become an everyday gadget. From voice-activated meeting room automation to thermal detection cameras, antimicrobial lights to room proximity intelligence, anything that requires touching distancing, or keeping clean is an opportunity for innovation. With all this in mind we're working on a number of new developments here at Logitech with a particular focus on how to enhance the video conferencing experience."

JOHN TRACEY, HEAD OF SALES ENABLEMENT - VIDEO COLLABORATION, LOGITECH

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THE FUTURE OF VIDEO COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY

NEW LEVELS OF USER CONFIDENCE

Work from home has been in place for months, giving people time to adjust to new ways of communicating. Most importantly, video users are more accepting of the situation and as a result – more confident on camera.

Dogs bark, children appear in the background, doorbells ring. It's all part of life and as more people understand this, the more relaxed they are. In turn this accelerates video adoption, making it easier for you to support employees who rely on video as an essential collaboration tool.

TOUCH-FREE CONFERENCING

Imagine being able to walk into a conference room and start a meeting with just your voice. Proximity join is a new development with endless possibilities such as looking up calendars, checking meetings, and starting conferences.

This removes the need for employees to touch anything while minimizing IT support.

"ANY SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM MAGIC"

Arthur C. Clarke, science fiction writer

DID YOU KNOW?
Proximity Based Meeting Join on Microsoft Teams enables you to walk into a room that was not invited to a meeting, and join a scheduled meeting.
Discover more here.

ULTRASONIC SOUND TECHNOLOGY

When combined with proximity join technology, this new wave of sound innovation can enable meeting content to be shared by simply walking into a room.

This contactless, seamless, wireless way of sharing reduces time spent searching for and entering a meeting ID number, and reduces the number of touch points needed to further support hygiene standards.

DID YOU KNOW?
Participants in Zoom Rooms can use one-click direct sharing from a Zoom Desktop Client, which automatically connects to the Zoom Room when the attendee clicks Share Screen. **Find out more here.**

THE FUTURE OF VIDEO COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY

SIMPLIFIED CONFERENCE ROOM INSTALLATION

For IT, meeting rooms can be time consuming to set up and maintain. With all-in-one integrated units, IT has room solution options that include a camera, speakers, microphone pods, hubs, and wires, to plugs into a touch panel.

That's an entire conference room set up instantly, with a layer of software that allows users to choose how they want to use the system, using touch or voice. Pre-configured with Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or the software of your choice, this technology has the potential to dramatically cut IT support time.

DID YOU KNOW?
Logitech Tap Room Solutions open up new touch control possibilities for applications like digital signage, room automation, and environmental control. Logitech Conference Cameras bring meetings to life with studio-quality video and unmatched voice clarity, and are certified for use with leading video collaboration apps. Find out on Logitech **Tap Room Solutions** and **Conference Camera**.

EFFECTIVE SPACE MANAGEMENT USING ROOM OCCUPANCY INSIGHTS

Computer vision lenses are another wave of innovation that could enable IT teams to assess room utilization.

This kind of analysis facilitates educated decision making on how to set up meeting spaces, or which rooms need to be made smaller, based on maximum numbers of occupants.

If you're limiting how many people enter a room, you can monitor a room's usage to make sure people don't go above a threshold.

Utilization data also provides planning insight to guide decision making, like helping you to re-plan floor formation of meeting rooms.

DID YOU KNOW?
Logitech Sync enables IT to understand room occupancy, and see whether rooms are used correctly and for the right amount of time. Check out the **Logitech Sync video** to learn more about this application.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES AND DESIGN INNOVATIONS FOR SIMPLIFIED VIDEO MEETINGS

Technology selected needs to enable a seamless user experience. Consider solutions that automatically frame images correctly and compensate for backlight to provide employees with easy and automatic meeting experiences that deliver superior image quality.

Evaluate room solutions that automatically share whiteboard content with remote attendees - if a participant walks towards a whiteboard in a meeting room, the whiteboard camera turns on and starts sharing having recognized the pattern of movement.

DID YOU KNOW?
With Logitech RightSense™ proactive technologies, video meetings are naturally more beautiful and efficient with no calibration, manual intervention or support required. For a magic whiteboard experience, the Logitech Brio Content Capture for Microsoft Teams shares analog whiteboard content with remote attendees in real-time. Discover more on **Logitech RightSense**, and **Brio Content Capture**.

TRANSFORM YOUR MEETING ROOMS WITH LOGITECH

"Imagine a crisis that forces your company's employees to change the way they work almost overnight. Despite initial fears that the pressure would be too great, you discover that this new way of working could be a blueprint for the long term." McKinsey[10]

We're seeing major changes occurring across all industries, from all verticals of public sector, including education and healthcare, to small-to-mid sized businesses, and all the way up to enterprise organizations. Where organizations once had temporary solutions in place for video collaboration, they now need longer term solutions to engage in a virtual world. In fact, Logitech's customers say the need for video collaboration in their business is extremely high, scoring it nine out of ten in terms of importance[11]. Whether its judges holding virtual court, lecturers giving interactive virtual seminars, or healthcare consultants conducting remote examinations, video enables employees to communicate in a way that feels up close and personal, even when not in the same room.

In a world where in-person interaction may take a long time to return, Logitech can support you to help your organization stay connected and engaged. Logitech's solutions for personal workspaces, and small, medium, and large meeting rooms, are easy to setup, manage, and use – and can help you transition smoothly to the next normal.

Transition to the next normal with
Logitech Video Collaboration Solutions.

Learn more, www.avisystems.com.
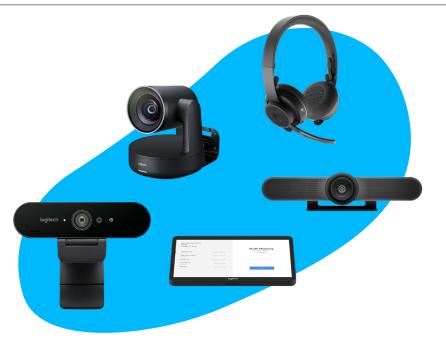
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Sources: 1. Logitech Covid WFH Research Report_Distribute May 2020 2.Microsoft blog - Remote work trend report: meetings 3. Digital Trends - Look at what the coronavirus pandemic did to Zoom's bottom line 4. Logitech Covid WFH Research Report_ Distribute May 2020 5. Logitech Next Normal Customer Survey 6. Gallup – "How Coronavirus Will Change the 'Next Normal' Workplace" 7. Logitech Covid WFH Research Report_Distribute May 2020 8. Logitech Next Normal Customer Survey June 2020 9. ZNet Life after lockdown: Your office job will never be the same - here's what to expect 10. McKinsey article "To emerge stronger from the COVID-19 crisis, companies should start reskilling their workforces now 11. Logitech Next Normal Customer Survey June 2020