

THE STATE OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS: HOW TO BUILD A MORE EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE THROUGH COGNITIVE COLLABORATION

A Global Survey of Business Professionals

April 2019



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Introduction

A total of 1501 international business professionals from companies of all sizes completed the survey on their use of and experiences with using meeting collaboration solutions. Additionally, the research focused on understanding and quantifying personal and business benefits of utilizing a new intelligent approach termed “cognitive collaboration” solutions. The survey was administered globally with participants from all 5 continents.

Executive Summary

In today’s global business climate with distributed team members, professionals spend hours each day in online meetings. However, almost 9 out of 10 report the tools to facilitate these online meetings are falling short of needs and expectations. Over 40% were frustrated just last week with their meeting experience with issues that included difficulty joining a meeting, connecting their device or sharing their desktop. This research finds that nearly 9 out of 10 participants want a new, cognitive collaboration solution immediately and are willing to swap solutions to take advantage of new, artificial intelligence-enabled features. And nearly half are willing to argue with the boss to get it.

Cognitive collaboration provides context and intelligence that’s woven throughout all collaboration experiences to foster human relationships, enhance customer interactions, and build high-performance teams across boundaries.

It involves capabilities like relationship intelligence that serves up detailed profile information in meetings, intelligent virtual assistants, facial recognition, natural language processing and conversational interfaces, noise detection and suppression, contextual real-time assistance, conversational bots, dynamic document sharing, conversational bot, and dynamic document sharing.

To learn more about cognitive collaboration, visit cisco.com/go/cognitivecollab

More than 8 out of 10 surveyed stated an intelligent meeting solution would deliver numerous business benefits such as providing background information on meeting attendees, tracking and assigning action items, providing relevant documents, tracking meeting attendees, and making setting up and joining meetings easier. The benefits extend from making meetings more productive to increasing overall business effectiveness. New cognitive collaboration tools are changing the game and can provide an advantage to the companies that adopt them.

Key findings

- **Collaborative Meeting Tools Failing**
 - 85% experience online meeting problems
 - 42% felt frustrated last week because they could not easily join an online meeting
 - 62% stated that LinkedIn fails to provide them with all the information they need on people to be prepared for meetings



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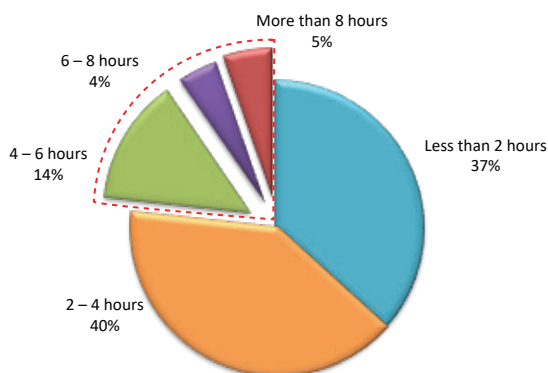
- **Overwhelming Desire for Cognitive Collaboration Solutions**
 - 89% want a cognitive collaboration solution today
 - 88% said they'd be willing to switch vendors for a solution that provides cognitive collaboration capabilities
 - 50% would be willing to argue with their boss in order to switch to a cognitive collaboration solution
- **Cognitive Collaboration Tool Benefits**
 - 81% say meeting effectiveness would increase with attendee background information
 - 87% see direct benefits from an online meeting virtual assistant
 - 93% indicate meeting effectiveness increases with relevant action items and documents
 - 90% show action item completion more likely with automated tracking and status

Detailed Findings

Workers Spend Hours in Meetings Each Day

This research sought to understand how professionals are using collaboration solutions, how frequently they use them and what would make meetings more effective for the business. Nearly a quarter (23%) spend half their work day or more in collaborative meetings. And 63% spend more than 2 hours every day in meetings. This reveals how critical a collaboration tool can be to productivity with the workforce spending hours in meetings per day.

On average, how many hours each day are spent on phone or video meetings?



Cognitive Collaboration

Cognitive collaboration provides context and intelligence that's woven throughout all collaboration experiences to foster human relationships, enhance customer interactions, and build high-performance teams across boundaries. Cisco Webex is the only collaboration solution that provides market-proven cognitive collaboration capabilities, so whether you're collaborating on Webex Teams, in a huddle space with a Webex Device or on your laptop or mobile device in Webex Meetings, you'll have the power of cognitive collaboration helping you to make smarter and faster decisions.

Webex Assistant: A virtual assistant that helps remove the mundane tasks associated with online meetings.

People Insights: Detailed people profiles within Webex Meetings that helps you foster better relationships with your colleagues, partners, clients and prospects.

Facial Recognition: Identifies individuals and provides name tags in your meetings to help you identify who's in the room and who's speaking.

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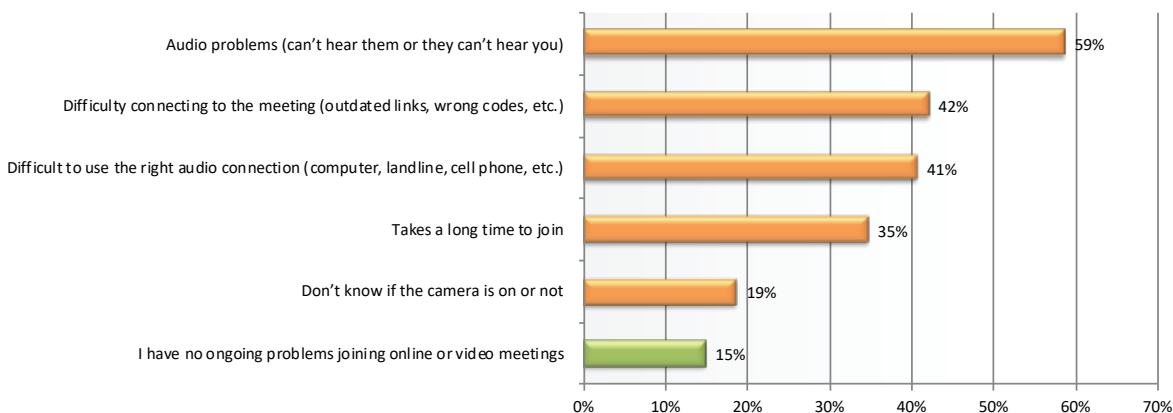


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Nearly All Experience Online Meeting Problems

A staggering 85% of participants report they experience meeting problems frequently. 59% indicated they experience audio issues, decreasing the effectiveness of the meeting. 42% of participants report they have problems simply connecting to the meeting room, citing outdated links or meeting codes. 41% of business professionals struggle with the ability to select the right audio setting when using their phone or their computer for the meeting. Participants also cited it takes a long time to join the meeting (35%) likely waiting to be admitted, while 19% were unable to tell if their camera was on or not. In short, collaboration meeting solutions are hampering meeting efficiency and wasting time.

Which challenges do you frequently experience when joining online or video meetings?



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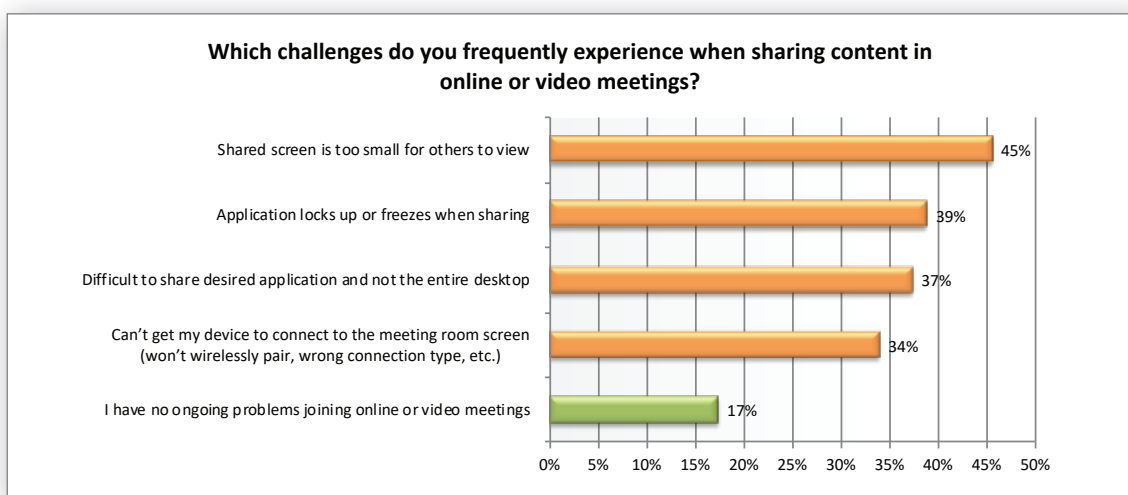
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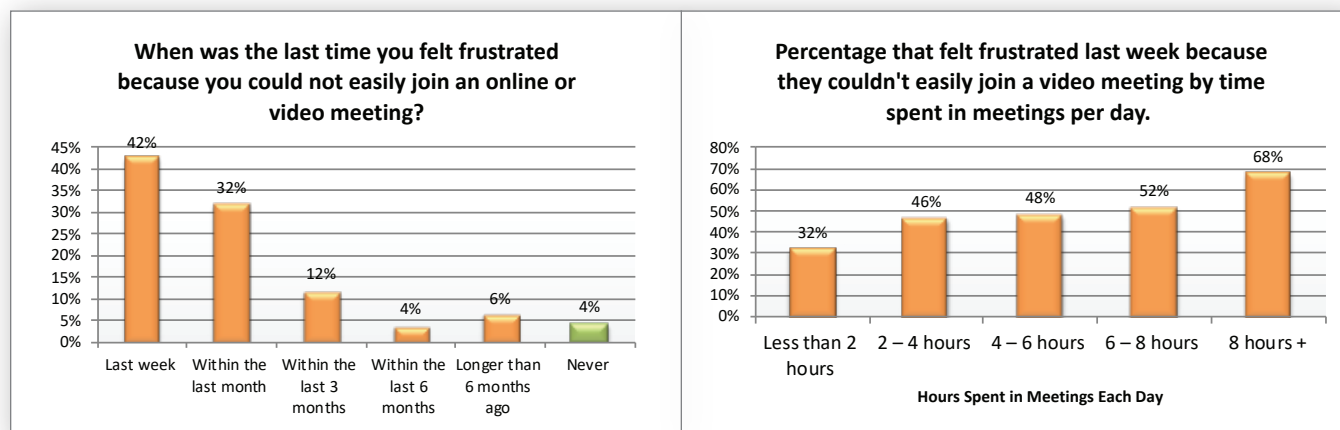
Simply Sharing a Screen is Often a Big Hurdle

One key aspect of collaborating during meetings is sharing a screen with others. But this research finds that even that simple task presents problems for 83% of those surveyed. Business professionals reported issues with too small of a screen size (45%), or the application or meeting tool locking up or freezing (39%) when sharing an application. 37% shared it was challenging to find the right functionality to just share the intended application without exposing their entire desktop. Even simply getting their device to connect with the meeting room screen created challenges for 34% of participants.



Meeting Tools Drive Users to Frustration

Those surveyed shared that the processes of joining a meeting or sharing a screen were not just inconveniences. In the last 7 days 42% of those surveyed stated they were actually frustrated from simply trying to join an online meeting. 75% of all participants reported being frustrated by their collaboration solution over the last month, with a paltry 4% stating that their meeting tool has not frustrated them. The research then compared the time spent in collaboration meetings with frustration levels. The situation worsens as those that spend more time in meetings and heavily rely on the collaboration tools are even more frustrated.



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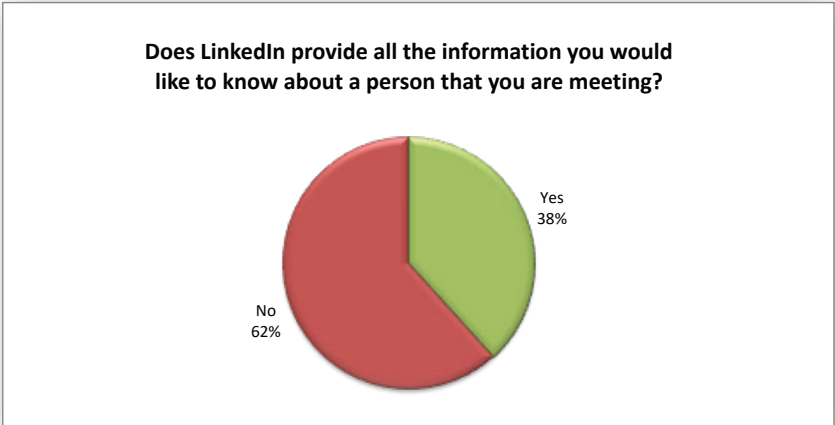
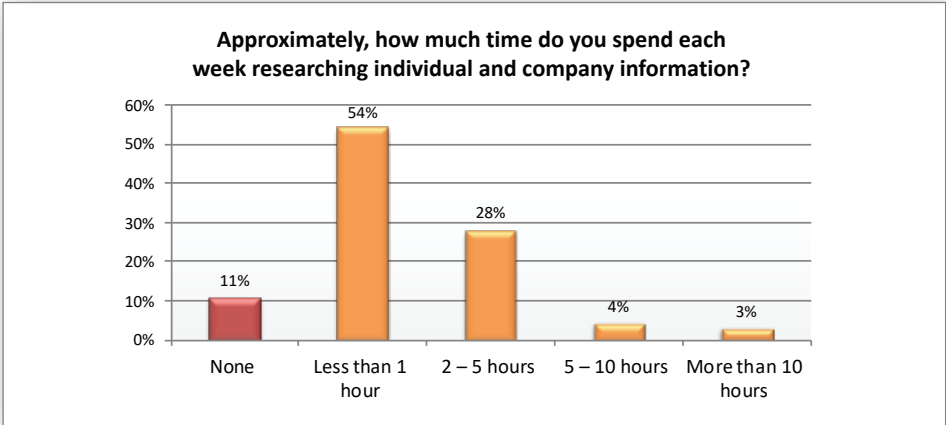
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Business Professionals Invest Hours Researching Prior to Meetings

Overwhelmingly (89%), business professionals shared that they invest time researching companies and individuals to increase meeting effectiveness and outcome. The research finds that 35% of those surveyed spend 2 hours or more each week researching information. Many business professionals leverage LinkedIn for finding information about the people they are meeting, but 62% stated that LinkedIn fails to provide all the information they require to be properly prepared.



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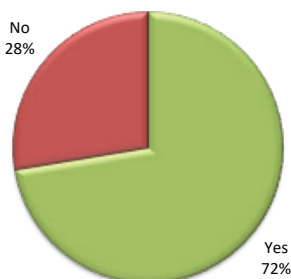


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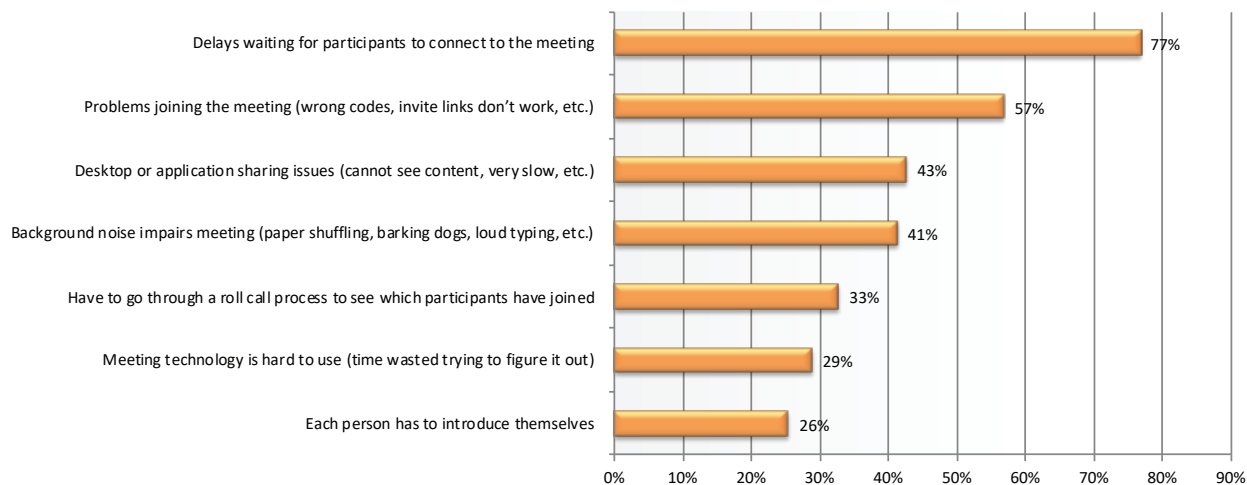
A Majority of Online Meetings Start Late and Waste Time

Business professionals' time is extremely valuable and, unfortunately, 72% report their time is being wasted waiting for meetings to start. The research focused on uncovering exactly why collaboration meetings start late. Unfortunately, numerous friction points lead to delayed meeting starts. The most common reason is waiting for people to join (77%), which can be exacerbated by the next most popular answer of having issues with meeting links or codes (57%). Nearly tied were sharing issues (43%) and background noises (41%), citing loud typing, dogs barking, and shuffling papers. Also causing delays was trying to understand who was on the call (33%) and waiting for everyone to introduce themselves (26%). 29% stated collaboration meetings start late because the technology is hard to use and they encounter issues with finding the right functionality or button to use. These findings indicate that there is room for improvement among collaboration solutions which can reduce frustration, remove friction points and improve productivity.

In your experience, do meetings that have participants joining by phone or video generally start late?



In your experience, why do meetings start late that have participants joining by phone or video?



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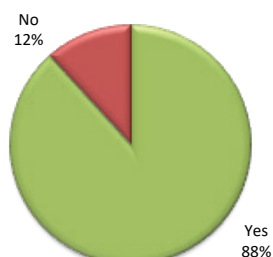
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Cognitive Collaboration Solutions Wanted

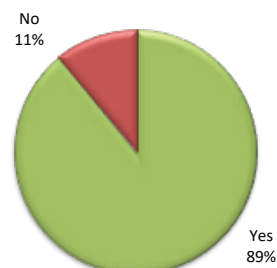
From the previous findings it is not surprising that 89% of business professionals want to leverage new, cognitive collaboration capabilities that provide context and intelligence within their collaboration solution. They want an experience that includes a virtual assistant and provides attendee intelligence.

And they want it now. In fact, 88% of them are willing to switch vendors to get it. Online meetings are frustrating users today. They need a solution that will make their meetings more effective and timelier, and 50% of them are ready to argue with their boss to get it.

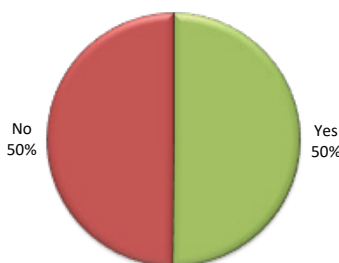
If your meeting solution provided deep insights about meeting attendees and a virtual assistant (takes notes, assigns action items, sends meeting invites, etc.), would you start using those capabilities as soon as possible?



Would you be interested in switching to a smart meeting solution that automatically presents relevant information about meeting participants and projects?



Would you argue with your boss about which audio and video meetings solution your team should consistently use?



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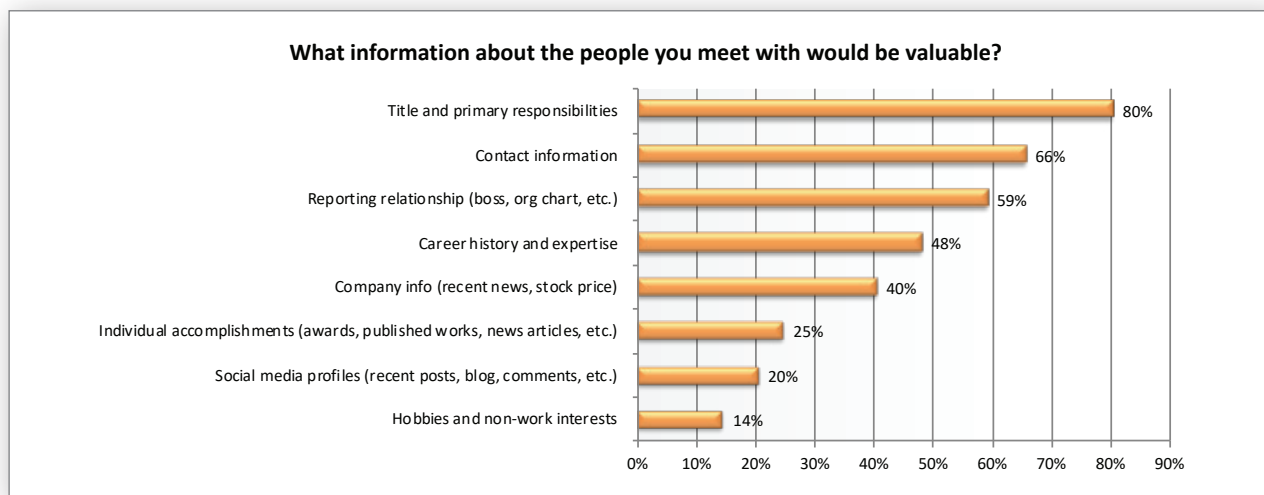
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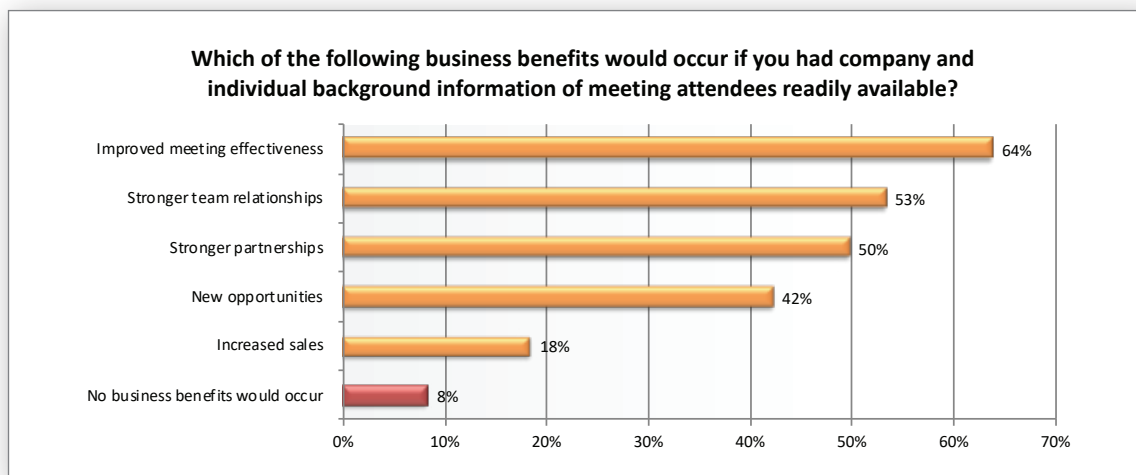
Business Professionals Require Comprehensive Attendee Information

The research wanted to remove subjectivity about what information about meeting attendees and their companies was truly needed and valuable. Attendee title and responsibilities (80%) topped the list of wanted information. Next was contact information (66%), reporting structure (59%), and career history and expertise (48%). 40% wanted company news, and information and significant accomplishments (25%) rounded out the desired professional knowledge. Some wanted to know more personal information such as social media content (20%) and hobbies (14%).



Attendee Background Information Translates to Business Benefits

The bottom line for more background information was not curiosity; many saw direct business benefits from this information, starting with increased meeting effectiveness (64%) and stronger relationships at the team level (53%) and partner level (50%). 42% expected the information to drive new opportunities and 18% said it would lead directly to more sales.



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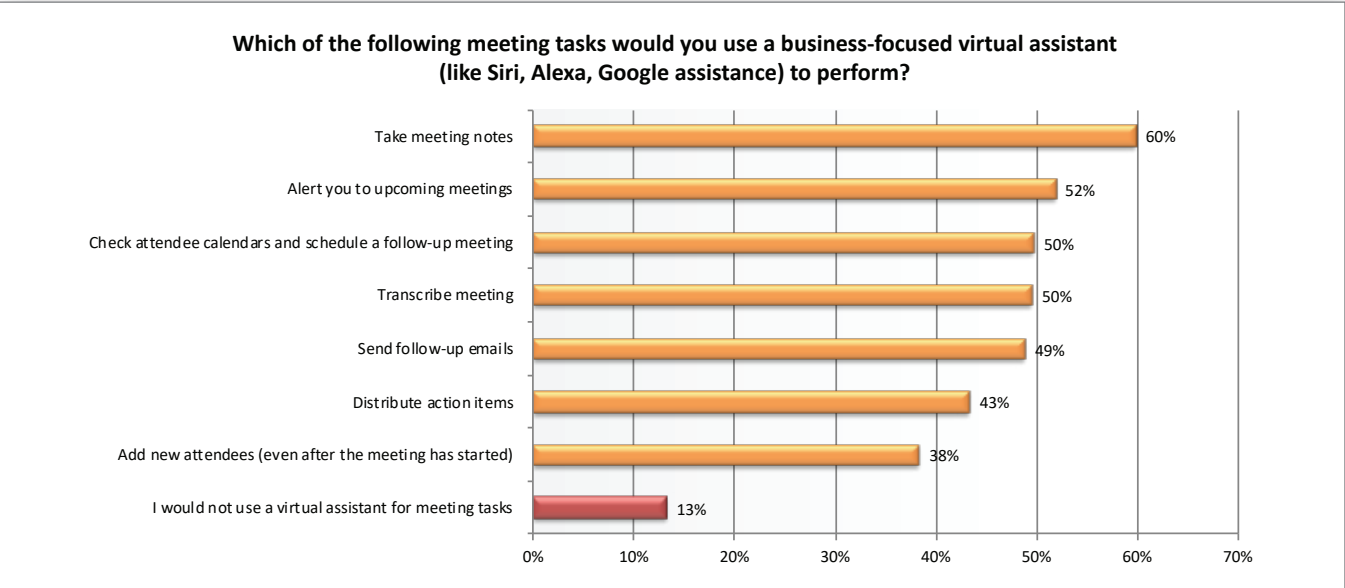
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Meeting Virtual Assistant Delivers Value

In addition to in-meeting attendee intelligence, virtual assistants are in high demand for meetings. 87% reported business value would be delivered from a meeting solution with virtual assistant capabilities. The research then focused on prioritizing which capabilities would deliver the most value. Topping the list at 60% was for the assistant to take meeting notes, followed by the ability to notify users of an impending meeting. 50% of business users saw value in an assistant that reviews meeting attendee calendars and then schedules a subsequent meeting based on availability. Participants want the ability to have a transcribed copy of the meeting (50%) and have the assistant send follow up emails (49%). Also, 38% of those surveyed wanted an assistant that could assign and distribute action items.



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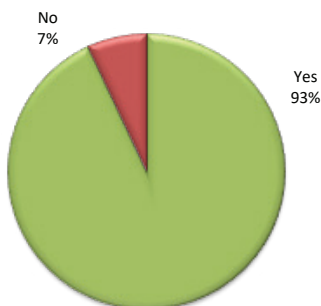


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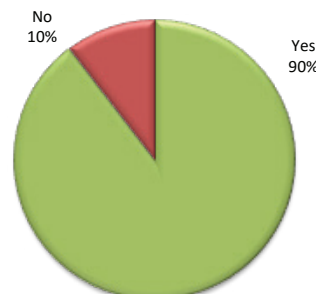
Cognitive Collaboration Solution Improves Productivity

Having a better meeting collaboration solution with a virtual assistant and attendee intelligence certainly would bring value, but the research wanted to directly map features to business benefits. 93% believe meeting effectiveness would increase if the meeting solution displayed relevant action items and associated documents. 90% assert action item completion will rise with automated tracking and reminders. Furthermore, 84% believe valuable meeting time could be reclaimed if the meeting solution showed by name who is currently in the meeting and who has left. 81% indicate that meetings will be more effective if attendee background information was proactively provided by a meeting solution. With clear business benefits tied to these capabilities, it is expected that companies will soon actively research and choose a meeting solution with cognitive collaboration features.

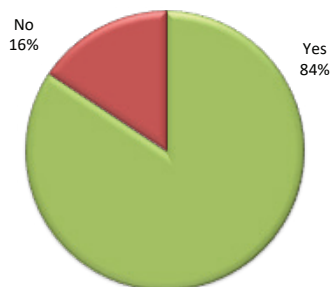
Would meetings be more effective if a meeting solution automatically displayed pending action items and relevant documents to attendees?



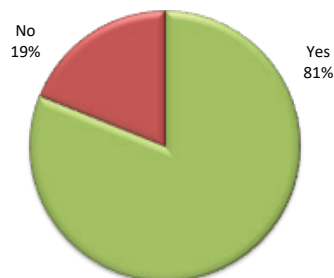
In your opinion, if a meeting solution tracked assigned action items and updated their status, would that increase action item completion?



In your opinion, would meetings be more productive if time was not spent on which attendees have joined or left the meeting?



Would having information and background about new people you meet with increase meeting effectiveness?



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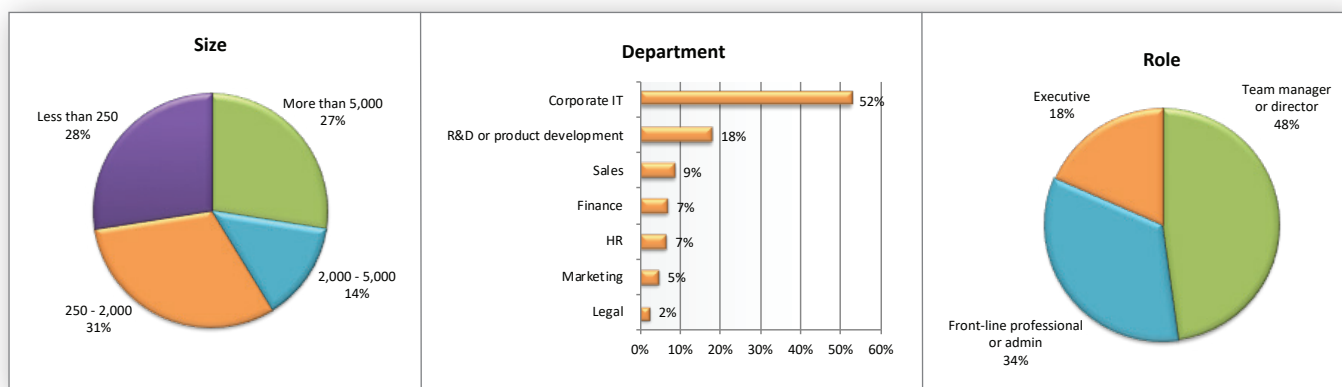
Conclusion

Companies are investing massive amounts of resources into meetings each day. Today's meeting tools that aren't leveraging cognitive capabilities are driving frustration into their employees, wasting time and producing less effective meetings. With the technology available today this is simply unacceptable.

A cognitive collaboration meeting solution is not just wanted, it is needed, and stated by nearly 9 out of 10 business professionals. This cognitive solution needs to make the meeting easier to attend and easier to share screens, and must have high quality audio, and video. The cognitive solution should provide new capabilities such as participant and company background information and come equipped with a virtual assistant that can help remove the mundane tasks we associate with meetings. The expected benefits are more effective meetings delivering top-line and bottom-line business benefits, and producing happier, less frustrated workers that would spend less time in meetings. While half the workers are willing to argue with their boss to bring these benefits to the business, they shouldn't have to.

Survey Methodology

A total of 1501 participants use online collaborative meeting tools weekly completed the survey. Participants were from all 5 continents. The survey was administered electronically, and participants were offered a token compensation for their participation.



About Dimensional Research

Dimensional Research provides practical marketing research to help technology companies make their customers more successful. Our researchers are experts in the people, processes, and technology of corporate IT and understand how IT organizations operate. We partner with our clients to deliver actionable information that reduces risks, increases customer satisfaction, and grows the business. For more information, visit www.dimensionalresearch.com.

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