Avoid the Sales/ IT Collision Scenario

Using apps for better collaboration

Online meeting tools offer significant business benefits for IT as well as sales professionals. Learn how the right app can increase productivity and improve your bottom-line results.

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IT must be more business-driven than ever to meet the broader strategic goals of the business, working in tandem with Sales to increase revenue growth or working with line-of-business executives to reduce operating costs and improve productivity. As organizations shift to a business-driven focus, productivity becomes a top business priority.[1]

Adapting to business needs—which is easier said than done—is the key to success in today's results-oriented IT environment.

To ensure success in this results-driven corporate environment, IT must demonstrate technology expertise, be innovative and collaborate across the organization. In sum, IT must transform itself into a customer-centric organization, especially when working with sales counterparts. *This scenario is now a reality, and many IT organizations are now in the midst of this transformation.*

Driving this shift is the ubiquitous consumerization of IT and its expansion from BYOD (bring your own device) to include BYOA (bring your own apps). As users regularly turn to consumer devices such as smartphones, tablet devices and their own laptops to conduct business, they expect big benefits from the practice of bringing their own apps. Those expectations, according to an IDG survey, include improvements in user satisfaction, productivity, business agility, process efficiency and collaboration; access to business information; and an increase in workflow velocity.[2]

Another factor driving this shift is social-media-fueled collaboration. Among the respondents to a recent *CIO Magazine* tech poll, 50 percent said that social media/collaboration is on their radar or is being piloted. Increasingly, CIOs are finding that the use of social media/collaboration tools is the primary driver of increased productivity, and such tools are well aligned with the BYOA trend.

Importantly, social tools connect employees to others and enable them to quickly interact and perform a variety of tasks. Yet it still remains up to IT to scale these more broadly and make these tools work for the organization. Meanwhile, IT is spread more thinly than ever as its role continues to evolve and its responsibilities increase.

IT must now spend considerable time on mobile application management (MAM) —often involving devices and applications it did not vet in the first place. The 2013 IDG "Consumerization of IT in the Enterprise" (CITE) study found that 51 percent of the responding end users and groups are using cloud-based services without explicit IT approval or support.

Case in point: Sales teams generally rely on IT recommendations for easy-to-use sales tools, but faced with intense pressure to reach their revenue quotas more easily, it's not uncommon for sales professionals to adopt apps not previously sanctioned by IT.

The impact on IT is significant. Instead of focusing on revenue-generating line-of-business activities or strategic IT projects, IT must now dedicate its resources to a massive volume of tedious, labor-intensive support issues that detract from key IT initiatives and do not contribute to the bottom line. The challenge is to alleviate much of this resource drain.

By embracing apps that are simple and easy to support, thereby eliminating much of that strain on resources, IT has a tremendous opportunity to take a giant step toward being a productivity enabler. Bringing in apps with the right balance of usability will result in end user adoption and IT readiness, with security, management and integration suitable for the organization's requirements.

In November 2013, IDG Research conducted

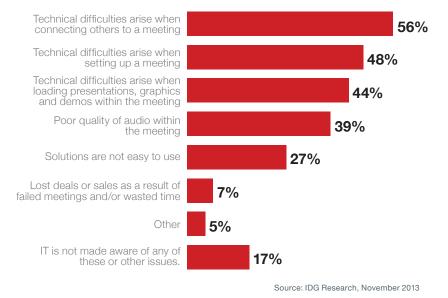[1] IDG Enterprise, State of the IT Organization, 2013. http://www.idgenterprise.com/report/state-of-the-it-organization
[2] IDG Enterprise, 2013 Consumerization of IT in the Enterprise http://www.idgenterprise.com/report/consumerization-of-it-in-the-enterprise-2013

User Issues Reported by Sales Regarding Cloud-based Meeting Applications

Technical difficulties arise when connecting others to a meeting **56%**

Technical difficulties arise when setting up a meeting **48%**

Technical difficulties arise when loading presentations, graphics and demos within the meeting **44%**

Poor quality of audio within the meeting **39%**

Solutions are not easy to use **27%**

Lost deals or sales as a result of failed meetings and/or wasted time **7%**

Other **5%**

IT is not made aware of any of these or other issues. **17%**

Source: IDG Research, November 2013

a survey of *InfoWorld* readers personally involved in the purchase process for day-to-day management of sales collaboration tools in their organization. The respondents included IT and business managers and professionals across a variety of industries, with 38 percent in organizations of 100 to 499 employees.

The research goals were to:
■ Discover the pain points sales teams are experiencing when using cloud-based or online meeting tools to collaborate or present product demos
■ Determine the most-desired capabilities and benefits of online sales collaboration tools
This white paper summarizes the key findings.

Collaboration: Key Business Requirements

Today there is increased demand for easy-to-use sales collaboration tools such as online meeting tools. These can help sales teams collaborate with prospects, customers and clients; deliver sales presentations; and demonstrate products on the fly with little or no process overhead.

Among the IDG Research survey respondents[3], 55 percent cited an increase in the number of meetings, the frequency of customer/prospect

[3] IDG Research, QuickPoll Research, November 2013.

meetings and increased productivity as the top perceived benefits of these online meeting applications for sales teams. Other key benefits are improved customer satisfaction (49 percent), cost savings (43 percent) and more-engaged/empowered employees (39 percent).

Significantly, nine out of 10 of the survey respondents agreed that BYOA and mobile trends are driving the need for IT to evaluate tools that are easy to use and compatible with multiple types of mobile devices.

"These findings align nicely with what we hear from IT leaders about their emerging challenge of balancing their traditional priorities with the needs of the end user and the business," says Lou Orfanos, VP of Collaboration Products at LogMeIn.
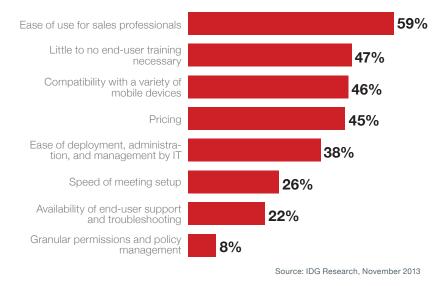
Yet research shows that the adoption of such apps is currently lagging or not standardized across the organization. In the survey, 34 percent of the respondents said that they have cloud-based (online) meeting applications in place but that departments and employees are allowed to use a different solution if they choose. Significantly, 17 percent indicated that they don't have one cloud-based meeting application in place and that employees and departments are using a variety of solutions on their own.

"These findings highlight a key issue that organizations face in trying to satisfy the use cases of the masses," says Orfanos. "The fruitless search for 'one tool to rule them all' has positioned use of best-of-breed apps designed to solve specific problems as the more frictionless path to handling day-to-day use cases," he says.

Meanwhile, sales teams continue to experience significant pain with meeting applications. Respondents report technical difficulties in these key customer-facing areas: connecting (56 percent), meeting setup (48 percent) and sharing content (44 percent)—as well as poor audio quality and solutions that are not easy to use.

When evaluating cloud-based meeting applications for sales professionals, decision-makers are most often concerned about the ease of using any of the tools.

Most Important Capabilities When Evaluating Cloud-based Meeting Applications

Capability	
Ease of use for sales professionals	**59%**
Little to no end-user training necessary	**47%**
Compatibility with a variety of mobile devices	**46%**
Pricing	**45%**
Ease of deployment, administration, and management by IT	**38%**
Speed of meeting setup	**26%**
Availability of end-user support and troubleshooting	**22%**
Granular permissions and policy management	**8%**

Source: IDG Research, November 2013

Technology can—and should—be an important *enabler*, especially for sales representatives who perform multiple sales demos daily. Technology failures can have a negative impact on sales performance, wasting time, which results in lost sales deals and the failure to attain revenue goals.

"The first impression you make on a client matters, and technical difficulty sets a bad early tone. Even beyond that first call, technology failures can lead to a broader lack of confidence that can permeate multiple deals and customer interac-

tions," explains Orfanos.

It's no wonder, then, that 59 percent of the respondents ranked ease of use as the No. 1 concern in evaluating online applications for sales professionals. Other top-ranking requirements are the ability to use the app with little or no training and compatibility with mobile devices, said 47 and 46 percent of respondents, respectively.

"Experience and ease of use are key," says Orfanos. "Think about what will enable people to have better meetings and increase the quality of collaboration. Simplicity is often the hardest thing to design but can have the greatest impact on workflow."

The right online collaboration tool can address business-driven IT requirements and alleviate labor-intensive IT support requirements. It can also increase the productivity of sales teams so they can more quickly attain revenue goals.

Effective Practices: Key Considerations

When evaluating an app, consider these five key elements:

❶ Look for simplicity and elegance rather than extraneous features that add clutter and require extensive user training.

❷ Carefully evaluate features and functionality.

❸ Select an app with an intuitive user interface that is easy to use and incorporates just the right features that sales teams require.

❹ Think how the tool will actually be used in a sales scenario, with limited process overhead (such as performing a common action with just one click).

❺ Map out workflows, so sales reps can understand exactly how the tools fit and how they can alleviate pain or reduce friction.

"This presents IT with a key opportunity to take a leadership role in partnering with business to find apps that people will love and that will relieve their pain. If you are in IT, this can add to your strategic value; if you are in Sales, it can promote what really matters: meeting and beating quota," Orfanos says. ■

join.me combines instant screen sharing and powerful meeting tools in an app that anyone can use to present, train, demo or conceptualize. It is designed to be intuitive and accessible, providing features for everything from show-and-tell to formal presentations. **join.me** features include the capacity to accommodate as many as 10 meeting participants; screen sharing; Internet calling; a viewer for iPad/iPhone or Android; and the ability to share control, use multiple monitors, chat and send files. **join.me pro** also offers meeting recording, annotation, unified audio and international conference lines, presenter swap, a meeting scheduler, window sharing, the ability to accommodate as many as 250 meeting participants and other advanced features.

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