



**MEETING ROOM MAKEOVER:  
IS YOUR COLLABORATION  
SPACE READY FOR THE  
NEW NORMAL?**



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# INTRODUCTION

Before the pandemic, we were spending between 31-60 minutes per meeting across 220 million meetings per year. What does this translate to, now that so many of us are working from home (WFH)?<sup>1</sup>

Meetings, like so many aspects of our workday, rely on face-to-face interactions. They are a critical part of how we collaborate, exchange ideas, learn new things, and pitch for better business outcomes. As we switched to WFH almost overnight, a meeting room makeover was among the top priorities in order to collaborate as usual. But the modalities are completely different: not only are we meeting on digital platforms, but coordination is difficult, and connectivity issues are common. How can businesses still empower their employees to be their best selves at work, be it from home or a social-distancing-friendly workplace? How do you redefine the meeting experience and infrastructure for the realities of the new normal? Read on as we explore viable answers.



**31-60**

minutes per meeting  
before the pandemic



**220**

million meetings per year  
before the pandemic



# HOW THE DEFINITION OF MEETINGS HAS CHANGED

The word ‘meeting’ used to conjure up a very specific image: ten or more participants seated around a rectangular table, with one person dominating the conversation. Engagement levels would vary dramatically, from someone studiously taking notes to another person checking emails on their phone. There may or may not be a conclusive takeaway from the meeting – the entire experience was limited to a scheduled hour or two, typically during the first half of your workday.

This changed significantly in the last half-decade, in part due to the rise of the agile model. As productivity timelines shrunk, meetings became more dynamic, focused, and outcome- (instead of protocol-) oriented. Face-to-face interactions were integral to this shift, as team members would routinely step into a quick huddle to catch up or discuss action points.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought yet another shift in the definition of meetings. Employees today are expected to deliver as per agile principles while working within their home’s unique structure and modalities. A good example is how ‘scheduling’ is once again the norm. Whether it is for two participants, five or ten – a fixed schedule lets WFH employees work around household chores, familial responsibilities, and personal time rather than impromptu sessions. These transitions place a lot of stress on your meeting room infrastructure.

For companies to adapt and provide employees with meetings that just *work*, it is critical to understand its new definition.

## ‘Meeting’

a countable noun

/ˈmi:tɪŋ/

an assembly of people for a particular purpose, especially for formal discussion

**Two or more** persons exchanging a vital thread of **human/organic** currency: an expression of emotion or thought, **wordless** but **visually evident**, or a statement/idea crystallized in a **verbal** rendition to elicit an intended **response/reaction** from the receiver of the message

Taking off from this definition, it is clear that the core essence of a meeting is what matters more now than ever before. Your job is to provide flexible, adaptive, and safe environments – whether digital or physical – that can facilitate such exchanges at minimal efforts from the meeting participant(s) and minimal costs to the company.

# 3 REASONS WHY EXISTING SETUPS ARE FALLING SHORT

Meeting & conferencing system usage is no longer an option. 74% of employees have increased their use of video conferencing after going remote, and this number will steadily rise beyond the pandemic<sup>2</sup>. However, traditional meeting room infrastructure is out of sync with emerging needs. Here's how.



## **BARRIERS TO ENTRY ARE HOLDING BACK WIDESPREAD USE**

Business leaders agree that video conferencing is as close as we can get to face-to-face interactions, enabling better collaboration for those working from home or sitting in different locations. But despite this, more than half (54%) were just beginning to or were in the process of reviewing their options before consolidating their technology systems<sup>3</sup>.

Expensive infrastructure, complicated setup, and limited compatibility with third-party equipment are common roadblocks to achieving that “perfect” meeting room. And these barriers trickle downstream to impact the user, extending their meeting joining times, requiring unnecessary installations, or duplicate hardware.

### **THE RESULT?**

Your adoption rates fail to reach the expected benchmark, and ROI stagnates.



## **A HIGH-TOUCH ENVIRONMENT RISKS EMPLOYEE HEALTH**

This is an unprecedented challenge for workplaces today. While many of us continue to work from home, several organizations have decided to reopen offices – and some, like small retail businesses or healthcare, don't have a choice. Meeting room equipment falls under the shared resources category, making it a high-risk zone for contamination.

This is why meeting/conference room cancellations were among the top five challenges faced by co-working spaces in the wake of COVID-19 (65.99%)<sup>4</sup>. Just as touchless technology and self-service have emerged as consumer must-haves, business leaders must prepare to reduce dependence on shared services and touch-based control.

### **THE RESULT?**

Companies must anticipate employee health concerns to engage and retain talent.

### 3.

## **EVERYONE IS A POWER USER, BUT THE EXPERIENCE IS POOR**

The current situation has turned every employee into video conferencing power users. Even those most resistant to change, who traditionally eschewed digital in favor of a quick in-person huddle, are now compelled to transition. However, meeting room experiences leave a lot to be desired. Lack of synchronization between calendars, sub-par audio quality, and a weak camera can put off employees from digital collaboration. Therefore, it's no surprise that there has been a 49% increase in employees avoiding collaboration with others since the WFH period<sup>5</sup>. There are latent meeting participant requirements, like smart audio pickup or studio-quality surround sound that goes unheard in a typical WFH environment.

#### **THE RESULT?**

Meetings become inefficient, and dependence on email grows endlessly.

An adaptive meeting room methodology will serve two purposes: a) equip WFH workers with the tools and technologies needed to boost productivity and b) enable a social distancing friendly office environment where too many people aren't put into a closed space, and the infrastructure is flexible enough for a variety of layouts as the regulations change.



# WHAT A SAFE, PRODUCTIVE MEETING SPACE LOOKS LIKE IN THE NEW NORMAL

Intersecting the two imperatives we just mentioned, companies must prioritize employee safety, whether at home or in the office. Employees around the world are worried about COVID-19 exposure in the workplace. A US survey found that 54% of employees see this as a major concern. According to another report, only 30% intend to return to physical premises after it reopens. In India, a whopping 93% of employees are stressed about returning to office post lockdown.

Meeting rooms are a space where we have traditionally spent a sizable portion of our workday. Keeping these spaces safe, mindful of employees' emerging needs, is critical if companies are to keep up their productivity levels in the short-term, employee retention in the mid-term, and the employer brand reputation in the long term. This requires a meeting room makeover centered on five key actionables.

## 1.

### **MEET WITH CUBICLE NEIGHBORS OR ACROSS BORDERS**

In the new normal, meeting room systems will serve a wide variety of use cases. A large office campus will see executives from different buildings (or even within the same building) join in a meeting virtually, to maintain social distancing. Employees that choose to stay remote despite unlocking will continue to communicate virtually. Some organizations took this opportunity to acquire remote talent who bring exceptional performance but are located on the opposite side of the world.

Meeting room systems must be versatile enough to meet all of these use cases without necessitating additional investments.

## 2.

### **REDUCE IT DEPENDENCY AND DEMOCRATIZE**

In a hybrid work environment, companies need to empower on-premise and WFH workers equally. But it might not be possible to dispatch IT personnel to visit employee homes and facilitate setup, and asking employees to break self-quarantine and come into office would cause health & safety concerns. Meeting room systems must involve as little IT dependency as possible, with a straightforward plug-and-play setup process that's democratic even for non-technical users.

This would go a long way in increasing conferencing systems adoption and your ROI at a time of tightening purse strings.

### 3.

#### **CONTROL VIA PERSONAL, NON-SHARED DEVICES**

Advancements in self-service interfaces and remote scheduling had already made physical, high-touch control hubs obsolete to an extent. The pandemic has pushed this trend to its natural conclusion, necessitating distributed control from a non-shared interface. Companies must adopt one-click launchers that use Bluetooth to locate a nearby space, recommend a slot based on participant calendars, and schedule a meeting all from a personal smartphone. This would also make the joining process dramatically simpler, addressing the oft-cited complaint that meetings are a “waste of time.”

### 4.

#### **MAKE HOME OFFICES TRANSLATABLE INTO HUDDLE ROOMS**

Among those not returning to a physical office, team managers and business leaders must keep up their existing collaboration practices from home. This means that every home office must work as a functional huddle room with all the bells and whistles like whiteboarding, a wide field of view, adequate mic range, PBX capabilities, cognitive audio features, and wired/wireless screen sharing. In the new normal, companies would invest in senior executives' home office environments, taking advantage of a straightforward setup process to eliminate any possible interruptions in business productivity.

### 5.

#### **EMPOWER USERS WITH STELLAR FEATURES**

Companies can expect high meeting room adoption rates only if users receive an impressive feature set. A basic video and audio setup is no longer sufficient – for meetings to reach their full potential, you need dynamic light exposure adjustment, intelligent framing, 3-dimensional audio, room mapping, and effective capture of even the most distant voice. Features like these take meetings one step closer to in-person communication, which continues to be difficult amid travel restrictions. A next-gen feature set will also help unify WFH, on-premise, and shift-based workforces to make the new normal sustainable.

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When you look at this to-be-achieved state and what meeting rooms look like today, there is a clear gap. Meeting room technology problems consume 10% of an IT manager's time, and approximately 1 in 5 extended meetings can be attributed to equipment failure<sup>6</sup>. When you multiply these numbers with the 220 million meetings taking place every year (and that is in the US alone), it's clear the businesses must act urgently.



# CONCLUSION: A CHECKLIST TO GAUGE YOUR READINESS

As you consider reopening offices (or plan to institute WFH indefinitely), you need a meeting room system that goes the distance. Whether connecting on-premise employees or talking to international clients, whether empowering power users at home or making huddle rooms safer, an integrated meeting room solution that makes life easier for IT is the need of the hour.

Where do you stand on this maturity curve between traditional conferencing rooms, emerging huddle spaces, and the new normal? Here is a handy checklist that can help gauge your readiness:

- **Licensing:** Do you need additional licensing costs for every room? How do licenses scale as your WFH workforce grows?
- **Self-service:** What is the degree of touch dependence? Do employees need shared buttons or touch screens to reserved meeting spaces and slots?
- **Compatibility:** Does your meeting room integrate smoothly with third-party systems? Given that most companies use 3+ platforms, do you have native compatibility?
- **Scale:** What happens when you need to conduct large, office-wide, or department meetings? What is your hardware and software's participant threshold?
- **Collaboration:** What capabilities are present for sharing content? Are pro features like dual display and wired content sharing ready at hand?
- **Telephony:** Can your meeting room double up as a telephony system for external clients/stakeholders? Can you integrate PBX, if it isn't natively available?
- **Setup:** Does the system include all your basics like a control hub, touch interface, audio, and camera? How much effort will it take IT (or an employee) to set it up?

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This self-assessment will tell you how a room's infrastructure stacks up against the needs of the new normal. Employers across the world are eager to provide their remote workers with the tools they need to be more productive, and this includes better hardware and equipment (55%)<sup>7</sup>.

A robust meeting room system is central to your productivity stack. Leverage a strategic meeting room makeover to empower workers in these uncertain times, even as you ease IT workloads significantly.



# CHOOSE SIMPLICITY WITH GOTOROOM



[Schedule a Demo](#)

GoToRoom by LogMeIn is an out of the box meeting room solution that is purpose-built for your needs. It scales up or down to meet huddle room, home office, conference room, or board room configurations, powered by industry-leading hardware from Poly, Logitech, and Dolby. Video conferencing usage has steadily grown over the last two years, with 1 in 4 employees using it more often<sup>8</sup>.

We offer turnkey solutions that require only 4 simple components to install: a monitor, an ethernet cable, an HDMI cable, and a power outlet. You can host up to 250 participants and up to 25 simultaneous webcams, gaining from Dolby's intelligent capabilities and a centralized GoTo admin center.

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