



JABRA MEETING EQUITY HANDBOOK

Improving the hybrid meeting experience with professional technology

Meetings are forever changed



WORK HAS GONE VIRTUAL

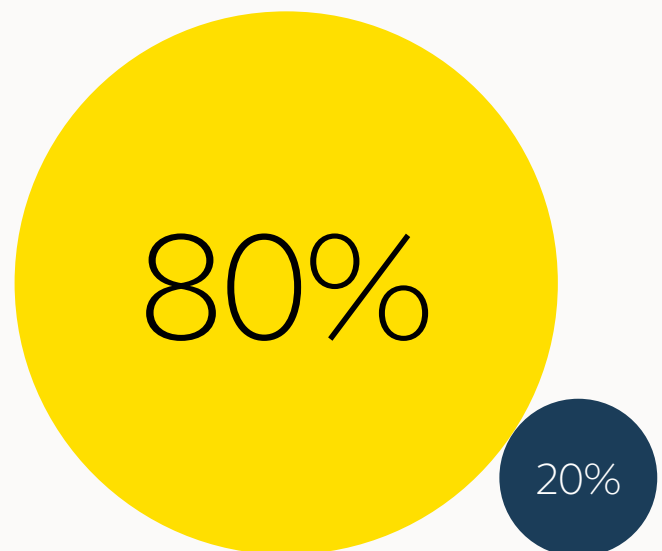
There's no denying that for knowledge workers, most daily activities have moved to virtual platforms. From lead generation and job interviews to webinars and informal chats, work now takes place mostly online. Similarly, video meetings are now the number one way that we connect with our colleagues. In fact, 80% of all meetings worldwide are now either fully virtual or hybrid, with only 20% happening fully in person.

This irreversible digital transformation has ushered in a new era of work, where employees are able to work just as productively and effectively from anywhere. But just as with any major change, it's also created a host of new challenges, not least of which are meetings.¹

FROM IN-PERSON TO REMOTE MEETINGS

Prior to the pandemic, most meetings took place in person. We sat around a table and hashed out ideas together in one room. Then came the pandemic, where the rapid transition to remote work moved all of our communications to virtual environments.

With every employee joining a meeting remotely, we had an unwritten "one person, one screen" way of working: each individual had their own individual camera stream and could join the meeting with relative ease. And in large part, this relative ease of meetings has led to a major increase in how many of them we have; Microsoft recently reported a 252% increase in weekly time spent in meetings for the average Teams user since February 2020.²



8 in 10 meetings are either fully remote or hybrid

¹Jabra Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report

²Microsoft Work Trend Index 2022

HYBRID MEETINGS BRING UNIQUE CHALLENGES

But now, as the majority of organizations are adopting flexible work models, a new form of meeting is emerging, one which poses a new set of challenges we've never before encountered: hybrid meetings. With some people joining a meeting from a meeting room, while others join remotely, both in-person and remote employees are increasingly frustrated with the meeting experience.

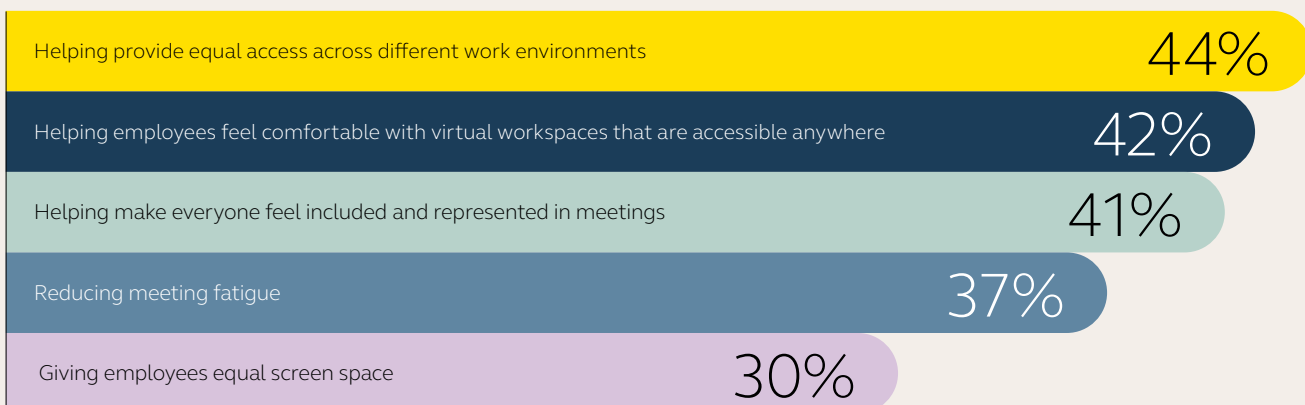
Specifically, many are feeling left out, unheard, and unseen. In hybrid work, video meetings will continue to be an essential point of contact between colleagues, customers, and clients. However, many organizations have yet to adopt the proper technologies and strategies to adapt to this new style of meeting.

IMPROVING MEETING EQUITY

Our ability to hear and be heard, as well as see and be seen in these hybrid environments will have a major impact on the efficacy of meetings. Similarly, if teams don't get the right training on hosting this type of meeting, many will simply assume that outdated, fully in-person meeting etiquette will be sufficient. And if we feel left out and uninvolved, engagement will drop, leading to lower levels of productivity and creativity in meetings, as well as higher levels of resentment for this new way of working.

In this eBook, we provide organizations with an actionable roadmap for improving meeting equity so they can create an inclusive, high-performing hybrid work environment.

Top benefits of technology for an inclusive workforce¹



¹Jabra Hybrid Ways of Working 2021 Global Report

What's meeting equity?



MEETING EQUITY, EXPLAINED

Ever heard of meeting equity? If not, don't worry. You're not alone. According to our recent Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report, only 30% of employees globally are familiar with the concept.

Associated primarily with this hybrid style of meeting, meeting equity is at its core about making sure that everyone has equal share of presence and voice in meetings, no matter where they're joining from. It's about making sure everyone is equitably represented in both the virtual and physical meeting environment.

THE UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD

We've seen how fully in-person meetings and fully virtual meetings provide a relatively equitable playing field. In hybrid meetings, however, if there are more people joining remotely than in-person, then the conversation will happen primarily in the virtual space. Similarly, if the majority is in the room, that's where the conversation will happen, leaving many remote participants on the sidelines.

In either case, the minority group will be at a disadvantage because they're situated "outside" of the primary meeting space. This is especially the case when those participants' physical and virtual work environments are poorly equipped for this kind of meeting style.

As we access 80% of our meetings virtually today, the technology we use as a gateway into those meetings directly affects our presence in them and our ability to effectively participate.

SEE AND BE SEEN, HEAR AND BE HEARD

To level out the playing field, leaders and IT decision makers must make two key considerations: visual equity and audio equity. This means making sure everyone can see and be seen, as well as hear and be heard. In hybrid work, this is an essential part of ensuring equal opportunity for contribution in meetings.

See and be seen equitably



Hear and be heard equitably



Whether you're in the room or not



See and be seen



EQUAL PIXEL REAL ESTATE

We like to think about visual equity in terms of real estate. Much like meeting rooms – and by extension people – take up square footage in an office space, so too do people occupy a finite amount of screen space in virtual meetings. There are only so many pixels on a screen, and the goal with visual equity is to ensure that everyone is allotted an equal amount of them, regardless of where they're joining the meeting from. This means solving the major challenge of presenting both in-person and remote participants equally on a screen.

THE INTELLIGENT VIDEO ADVANTAGE

From the in-room perspective, there's only one way this challenge can really be solved, and it starts with artificial intelligence. To capture multiple individualized video feeds of several people in one room, an in-room video camera must be able to identify and frame those people independently of one another. This requires artificial intelligence. Without it, the device lacks the ability to effectively distinguish between participants in real time, as well as to follow them around the room should they decide to move over to the whiteboard or just need to think on their feet. Of course, all of this is also only made possible if you're using a meeting platform that supports this advanced intelligent video technology.

NOT ALL MEETING PLATFORMS ARE THE SAME

According to Nicholas Bloom, the William Eberle Professor of Economics at Stanford University and a leading expert on the future of work, the number of full work-from-home days will increase from 5% pre-pandemic to 25% in 2023, representing a 5x increase in the market for WFH technology. This increase has fast-tracked the development of hardware and software to support a more flexible working style. One new way that video technology is innovating is by introducing new functions to support greater visual equity.

70%

of employees say that standardized professional video cameras would help everyone participate equally in hybrid meetings¹

Microsoft Teams, for example, has introduced Gallery View, which takes a novel approach to presenting all virtual and in-room participants equitably in meetings. Similarly, Zoom has created Smart Gallery, which leverages in-room video solutions to bring everyone into the virtual environment, no matter where they're at. When trying to boost visual equity, IT decision makers will need to consider whether their in-room video solutions support these kinds of inclusive functions that video platforms are beginning to offer.



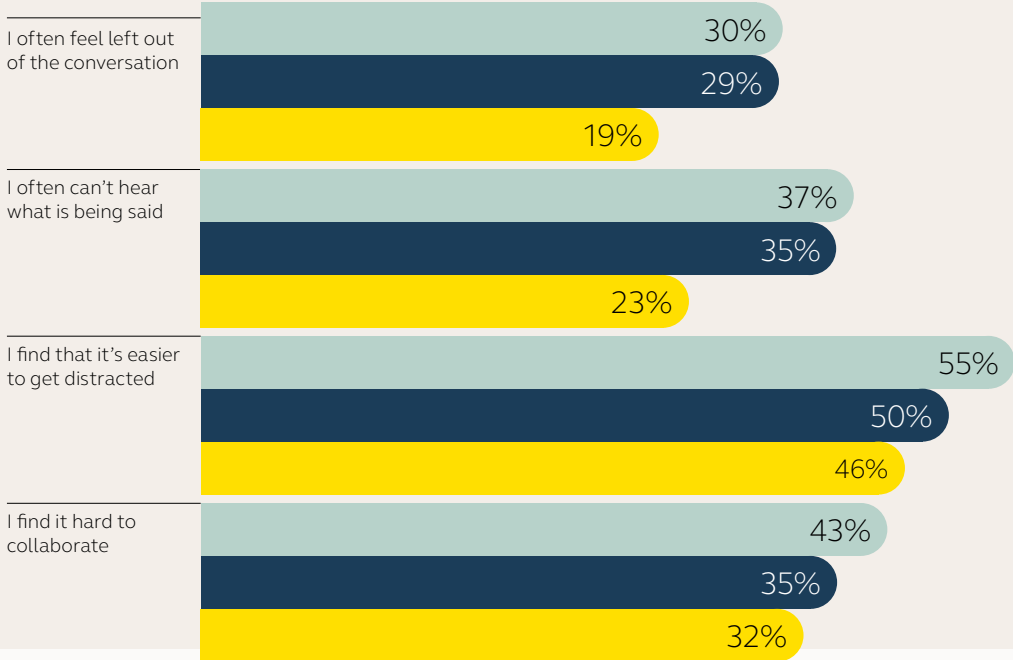
Hear and be heard

PROFESSIONAL HEADSETS BOOST INCLUSION FOR REMOTE PARTICIPANTS

Microsoft’s recent Work Trend Index report found that 43% of leaders say building social capital is the biggest challenge of remote and hybrid work. Similarly, our 2021 research has shown that the sense of connection amongst teams decreased by 28% during remote work.¹ Over time, this lack of connection can weaken company culture and lead to employee burnout. Since connection now takes place in virtual environments, we need tools that make everyone feel like they’re in the room.

In our most recent Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report, professional device users were 11% less likely to report feeling left out of the conversation in virtual meetings than built-in audio users and 10% less likely than consumer device users. Similarly, they were 14% less likely to report having trouble hearing what’s being said than built-in audio users and 12% less likely than consumer users. With professional devices, employees are better able to maintain that sense of team connection in hybrid and remote work.

“Compared to a face-to-face meeting, when I join a virtual meeting where everyone else is also virtual...”



- No external device**
Those using only the built-in microphone and speakers on their computer, tablet, or mobile device
- Consumer device**
Those using an audio device designed primarily for music and streaming
- Professional device**
Those using an audio device designed specifically for use on UC platforms, such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom

¹Jabra Hybrid Ways of Working 2021 Global Report

IN-ROOM AUDIO ENSURES EQUAL SHARE OF VOICE

Just as it takes two to tango, it takes two audio endpoints to have an effective meeting. While professional headsets boost the incoming and outgoing audio of participants joining virtual and hybrid meetings remotely, the meeting experience is greatly impaired if in-room meeting participants are poorly equipped. In the meeting room, employees rely on the capabilities of speakerphone audio solutions to provide a high-quality incoming and outgoing audio experience.

With this comes its own set of challenges. For example, the voice of those sitting too far from the speakerphone often comes through at a very low volume, while the voice of those sitting very close can be heard crystal clear. This gives preferential clarity of voice to those sitting close to the microphone. However, the answer to this issue is not to crowd around one end of the table. Rather, it's to equip rooms with professional audio technology that accounts for this disparity in voice pickup and adjusts to ensure that all voices are transmitted at the same volume regardless of how loudly or quietly an individual speaks.

The benefits of audio equity

Only
23%

of professional audio device users report trouble hearing what's being said in virtual meetings, compared to 35% of consumer audio device users²

68%

of employees want professional-grade equipment for a standardized company-wide experience¹

75%

of employees say that audio equity – where all employees use the same standardized and professional audio devices to access their meetings – would improve hybrid meetings so that everyone can participate equally²

“

Our Hybrid Ways of Working 2021 Global Report found that equal screen space was a top employee concern for inclusivity in hybrid working. Luckily, they believe that with the right technology, hybrid meetings can be an engaging and inclusive experience for everyone, no matter where they are.

**Aurangzeb Khan,
SVP, Jabra**

Building an inclusive hybrid meeting culture



CULTURE ENABLES SUCCESS

It's clear that technology will be central in creating a hybrid working environment where everyone has equal opportunity to contribute. However, that tech only matters if it's being deployed in an environment where everyone's voice is valued, and everyone feels their opinions are respected. Depending on things like a team's demographic diversity or meeting culture, not everyone may feel equally comfortable speaking up.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN HYBRID WORK

One way to examine these dynamics is to consider psychological safety, or the belief that one can speak up without risk of punishment or humiliation. According to Amy Edmonson, Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management at Harvard Business School, psychological safety is "a critical driver of high-quality decision making, healthy group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, greater innovation, and more effective execution in organizations."¹ However, she also notes that it's often challenged in hybrid environments, where some may be criticized for their choice of location.

¹Edmonson and Mortensen, What Psychological Safety Looks Like in the Hybrid Workplace

BOOSTING INCLUSION AND CONFIDENCE FROM ANYWHERE

If all employees are to feel comfortable speaking up in hybrid meetings, it's important for managers to reassure all employees that their opinions are equally valued regardless of their work location.

First, managers need to have an explicit discussion about psychological safety, perhaps sharing some of their own challenges of adapting to a hybrid meeting environment. Similarly, they must be on the lookout for group dynamics, which create an advantage for one meeting environment over another, such as if in-room participants begin to turn away from the camera and have discussions amongst themselves.

Only with these practices in place will teams truly get the most out of new collaboration technologies.



Diversity means getting an invitation to the party, but inclusion is actually being asked to dance. Plenty of companies are good at the party invitations, but less so at bringing everyone onto the dance floor. From both a moral and business perspective, it's crucial that all ideas are not only brought to the table but are also given the consideration and support to reach their fullest potential.

Kelly Nagel,
President & GM of North America, Jabra

Find out more

If you have any questions about Jabra products, please contact your Jabra representative or visit [Jabra.com](https://www.jabra.com)

WHO WE ARE

Hej. (That's 'hi' in Danish.) We're Jabra and we've been engineering technology that makes life look and sound better for over 150 years. And you? Well, you might be running a million-dollar account from your kitchen (or café, or school run, or just about anywhere really). Or running your first 5k with a pair of expertly engineered earbuds. Or running a project via video, beaming yourself from a Toronto armchair to a Tokyo boardroom. Whatever you've got going on, we've got you. With advanced, intelligent video technology. And an incredible sound quality that makes your voice and your music sound better than ever. All designed to bring life and work wonderfully in tune.

Jabra. Technology for life's new rhythm.