



Avaya Spaces: The Race to the Digital Workplace Starts with Meetings and Chat

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Issues: Who are the providers in communications and collaboration and how are they evolving?

How will work hubs evolve?

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SUMMARY

Avaya announced its new Avaya Spaces offering that combines messaging, meetings, and file sharing to form an easy-to-use digital work hub.

INTRODUCTION

The meeting and team collaboration markets are on a collision course. In 2020, team collaboration is poised to challenge email as the most popular way to communicate with team members and customers.

Avaya announced its newest entry into the digital workplace market, Avaya Spaces, which is poised to challenge existing alternatives with its compelling interface, usability, and functionality.

Key Findings:

- **Prediction:** Team collaboration, with real-time interactions between people, will overtake email by 2025 (80% probability).
- **Prediction:** By YE 2022, the team collaboration and web meetings markets will converge (70% probability).

Analysis of Avaya Spaces and its Updated Offering

The shift away from email to messaging as a core work tool is well underway. Avaya, with its large install base, can now meet the demand for a communications-based work hub. Avaya Spaces is a complete digital work hub that leverages all the different modalities of collaboration—messaging and meetings and seamless sharing of content.

Doing this with support for internal and external use cases is a key differentiator, since many offerings require extra licenses for external users.

Avaya Spaces Overview

Avaya Spaces puts the focus on the work, not on the modality. With a completely revamped set of features, including chat and file sharing, Avaya goes beyond the heritage of meetings. Many offerings focus on either messaging or meetings. The integration component is often an afterthought.

Note 1: Avaya Spaces at a Glance

Avaya Spaces is the latest edition of its collaboration software package offering that blends messaging and meetings into a communications-led digital work hub. The core capabilities include:

- Audio and video-based meetings
- File sharing and content management
- Integration with Avaya Voice offerings
- Integration with Avaya and third parties
- Task management
- Team collaboration (messaging)
- Video room systems

Note: Avaya offers a free version of Avaya Spaces in certain countries to try out. For more information on Avaya's solution, [click here](#).



Figure 1: Avaya Spaces in action, featuring meetings and chat.

As a digital work hub, Avaya Spaces is integrated and fully featured, making it a solid choice for internal and external

use cases. Enterprises that have best of breed messaging or meetings offerings may want to look at offerings like Avaya's that function as true work hubs.

The Intersection of Meetings and Chat

Meetings and team collaboration have been on a collision course for a long time. While the importance of online meetings has grown thanks to better video experiences, so has the demand for faster communications—enter team collaboration.

The need to collaborate and meet on-the-fly is increasingly common in the workplace. Due to its speed and the guarantee of delivery to the other party, team collaboration is a popular solution to this problem. With communications and collaboration more intertwined together, it makes more sense to use one provider for both messaging and meetings.

Market Implications

The need to collaborate seamlessly means that technology providers need to evolve. As users become savvier, they're realizing that having separate tools for communications and collaboration no longer supports how they work. This means that office productivity suites—which had once placed email as the dominant application—are no longer the center of the universe.

Business teams already know that messaging helps to get work done; IT teams need to adapt the tools that they use for knowledge workers. The new battle cry will be digital work hubs that have team collaboration at the center.

Prediction: *Team collaboration, with its real-time interactions between people, will overtake email by 2025 (80% probability).*

Because a chat session can often lead to or shift into a meeting, we are predicting that meetings and team collaboration will be offered as a bundle. Functionality needs to be separate. Users don't want to have a meeting just so they can chat, but the need to offer both capabilities is needed in the enterprise—and having two different products, particularly internally, doesn't make sense.

Prediction: *By YE 2022, the team collaboration and web meetings markets will converge (70% probability).*

Focusing On People vs. the Channel

The need to focus on the work at hand is really a product design paradigm. By focusing less on each modality, and instead on people's ability to get the work done, regardless

of where they are in the tool, people-centric collaboration promises to transform business practices.

Aragon feels that all communications and collaboration offerings face this challenge—the ability to be channel neutral. The seamless operation of Avaya Spaces suggests the application’s developers understand this as well.

Avaya Spaces as a Digital Work Hub

One of the key aspects of a digital work hub is making work easier and less prone to interruption. The updated Avaya Spaces user interface is industrially designed to function as a work hub, not just a messaging service with meetings.

Spaces does what its name implies: it allows users to create persistent topic or project workspaces within which they can collaborate via messaging, meetings, and share content through a browser or a mobile app. The addition of easy file sharing makes Spaces a true work hub, ready to compete against others such as Dropbox, Google, Microsoft, Wrike, and Workfront.

Best of breed product offerings in the workplace are maturing—and Aragon has a view of how this evolution will take place (see Figure 2). Suffice to say that Work Hubs are the future; they simply offer the most productivity and functionality to their knowledge workers.

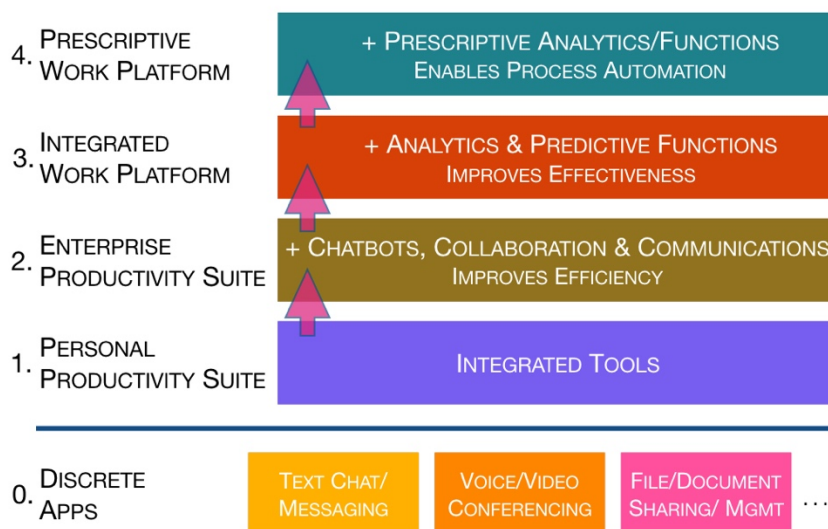


Figure 2: A snapshot of the emerging categories of digital work hubs.

How Avaya Spaces Integrates with Video Huddle Rooms

On top of being a digital work hub, Avaya has also continued to innovate Avaya Spaces as a full meeting platform. Avaya Spaces can now integrate with Avaya Huddle Room offerings, including the Avaya Collaboration Unit CU360. Avaya also offers SIP connectivity so other room systems can connect as well.

Avaya's solution offers full benefits to desk-bound knowledge workers, as well as the mobile professional. Having a full mobile app allows those professionals who are always on the go to have access to the messages, meetings, and the team content that helps them get their job done.

One key aspect of huddle rooms is the ability to switch between the mobile device and the huddle room device when a person walks into the video-enabled conference room.

How Should Enterprises Prepare for the Changing Nature of Work?

Enterprises need to realize that more choices are available now for workplace productivity than ever before. The first step is to look at consolidating messaging with meetings. These two work modalities have the most synergy and make the most sense when heading towards an integrated work hub approach.

Often, replacing two products with one offering can help to justify the change. Even the time saved by eliminating workplace interruption, which can cost workers 10 minutes each time they switch applications, makes the transition worth it.

The other thing that enterprises should look at is how teams do work and how work gets done. Because content is so vital to the enterprise, work hub offerings that leverage content should receive more consideration than ones that only combine functions, such as meetings and messaging.

Aragon Advisory

- Enterprises need to understand the growing importance of team collaboration and how it intersects with meetings.
- Work is changing and communications-led digital work hubs, such as Avaya Spaces and others, are ones to evaluate.
- Enterprises should ask providers for product roadmaps for the next 24 months.

Bottom Line

Avaya is introducing Avaya Spaces at a key time when enterprises are faced with the issue of too many tools in the workplace. The combination of meetings and team collaboration is part of the way that work will evolve. Enterprises should evaluate Avaya Spaces and other offerings as full digital work hubs to increase the productivity and speed of outputs for internal and customer-facing teams.