

Podcast Episode 34: Reshaping the connected future of work

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Nikhil: Hi Gary and Rakshit, we are delighted to welcome you to our podcast, Reshaping the Connected Future of Work, where we will discuss the evolving workplace dynamics and what matters most to the employees. Gary, we would like to start with you.

Gary: Great. Thank you. And it's great being here on the podcast.

Three years ago, \$50 million knowledge workers were sent home. It's crucial to acknowledge their distinct preferences and work methods as the future of work is now centered on efficient and effective work environments, enhancing client and employee experiences.

As the interaction between employees and companies is evolving, employees worldwide are seeking to upskill and learn how to adapt to a changing work environment. The traditional office setting is no longer sufficient, and employees are seeking ways to work in a more collaborative environment. The workplace is witnessing the first simultaneous work of five generations, with the Gen Z model dominating the others. 70% of employees feel unprepared for the future, prompting a question on how to upskill for this new work environment.

I believe that what matters to employees is the need to be productive regardless of where they work. They argue that productivity is lessened when traveling to client sites. The Zoom platform allows them to be productive at any location, enhancing their productivity and adaptability to new work environments. This shift in productivity is crucial for employees today.

The third thing is that we earn the right to ask employees to commute. If I am going to that office or that location, I need to have a reason. The workplace has evolved into a destination for collaboration, and when I go there, I want the solutions that will make me productive for the day. For example, if companies return and people work separately and do not get together and collaborate, they are recreating that home in the office, which is most likely a failure. It is about how businesses earn the right to ask employees to commute. So, when I go to the office to collaborate with my colleagues, I want to have a productive day.

We have all heard the buzzwords for artificial intelligence, but I believe what employees want is whether the company will provide them with the tools that they need to focus on the signal rather than the noise. They want to be able to focus and engage in meaningful and intelligent interactions, not be distracted by a plethora of disconnected applications.

I believe that one of the other things that employees want today is to assist them in helping clients. They understand what their clients want, but the company must provide them with

the solutions they require for them to delight their customers. Finally, when we talk about experience, I believe we should consider how we will track both the employee and customer experiences.

Before the pandemic, most companies considered employee experience to be an HR issue, while customer experience was a sales and marketing issue. Today we must examine them collectively. We must examine those journeys together. Nothing is worse than failing to provide an employee with the tools that they require to make a customer happy, and vice versa. So, I believe those are some of the issues that concern employees today.

Rakshit: First of all, thank you for having me here on this podcast. I concur with Gary on the hybrid work model. It is indeed a paradigm shift and a learning curve for everyone involved. Identifying and equipping the right stakeholders across the board amid blurring workplace boundaries is crucial, but at the same time, employee experience and productivity are at the heart of this transformation. So empowering employees with hyper-personalization is going to be very key. Employees have been at the receiving end of a lot of new technology in the recent past.

And the adoption of the technology is key to organizations ensuring successful digital transformation. Workplaces are evolving into collaboration hubs for employees to get together to network, socialize, and discuss new ideas. This makes it crucial for workplace leaders to find ways to make workplace technologies more intuitive and interactive.

Smart, connected workplaces must also prioritize the well-being of the employees, leveraging data analytics to saliently support employee wellbeing by promoting work-life balance and fostering positive company culture. Data analytics can allow organizations to gain insights into employee behavior, customer preferences and operational efficiencies, helping them to make informed decisions. And most importantly on this topic, the workplace now is at the forefront of driving sustainability within the organization by providing ways and means, which make the organization much more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable. It is about creating a shared value system with the employees and winning it together.

Nikhil: Thanks for sharing your thoughts. I think one of the key takeaways from your message, I believe, is making this change much more sustainable for the employees and for the larger organization. Technology is not just a mere enabler. We need to start thinking about how technology can touch the human aspect of the employees.

Moving on to the second question, Rakshit. We are increasingly observing that the workplace today is rather becoming a mesh of smart connections. What, in your opinion, are the crucial building blocks of a smart connected workplace?

Rakshit: Absolutely Nikhil. We are increasingly observing that office spaces are fast becoming collaboration hubs where employees are getting together to achieve significant

outcomes. At other times, employees could be on the move at various locations with a similar expectation from their collaboration platform.

Our vision for connected smart workplaces has been to empower the workforce to collaborate seamlessly from anywhere and through any device and ensure employees are focused on the flow of work rather than the flow of information from one platform to another. Let me elaborate a bit more about HCLTech Digital Workplace Five "E" principles, which serve as the building blocks for designing a connected workplace for an enterprise. Collaboration experiences are tailored to users' and organizations' aspirations, identifying personas and work styles to provide the optimum collaboration experience.

Second, empowerment is very important. Smart connected workplaces utilize the right technology elements to foster collaboration, enabling employees to innovate and contribute to business goals.

Third is enablement. Smart, connected workplaces consider the finer aspects like digital dexterity, change adoption, and behavior change management. Design enablement programs that are widely accepted and equip employees to leverage technology to its optimum potential.

Fourth is Engagement. Employee interaction with collaboration platforms starts much before the scheduled meeting times. The smart connected workplace optimizes employee engagement by considering pre-meeting, in-meeting, and post-meeting requirements such as booking the right meeting room, work desk, wayfinding, whiteboarding, and transcription, ensuring a seamless and productive work environment.

Fifth is the Evolution. HCLTech IPs augment the smart connected workplace to ensure that the management of complex technology platforms is unified into a single pane of management. Being able to identify the collaboration demographics, helps the organization develop a data-backed roadmap for the collaboration ecosystem.

Nikhil: You know, earlier you mentioned that offices are changing into collaboration hubs, right? When we talk about smart, connected workplaces, we must work towards eliminating the fear of meeting rooms for the employees, as we go forward. As an employee, I shouldn't be afraid to go into a meeting room without feeling like an AV expert. So I think that's something that we all need to aim and work towards. How does Zoom create a smart, connected experience for the workers of today and help them navigate their entire workday and remain meaningfully productive as well?

Gary: That's a great question. Zoom prioritized employee and client experience, making it a top meeting app, pre-pandemic. During the pandemic, it evolved into a platform that provides an end-to-end experience, focusing on meeting needs, and enhancing the overall user experience.

Employees want a single interface for daily solutions, eliminating the need for toggle tax. They often spend their day on laptops, constantly opening and closing applications, causing frustration and time-consuming tasks. A single interface can help streamline these processes and save time for employees. Zoom One is a platform designed to help employees save up to 1.5 hours of productivity by reducing time spent switching applications. The platform is divided into various areas, ensuring that employees are productive throughout the day.

Zoom allows employees to start their day online, send emails, and continue their day in the office via chat. They can join meetings or calls when they return to the office. The goal is to make Zoom a productive tool for employees.

Next, Zoom Spaces is a new way to bring people together physically, allowing for more meaningful conversations and collaboration. Previously, people would sit in conference rooms and talk to the screen, focusing on the right person. However, technology now allows for collaborative meetings in these spaces, allowing for more inclusive interactions. Zoom Spaces focuses on finding the right desk, providing information through signage, and collaborating where technology does the job. The goal is to provide an excellent customer experience, not just a conversation about the Zoom platform. The platform aims to provide a more inclusive and collaborative environment, allowing people to connect with their peers and work together effectively. The platform is not just about the technology, but also about providing an excellent customer experience.

Zoom phone, contact center, and virtual agent are essential tools for a seamless transition between phone and video interactions. The goal is to provide quick, easy-to-answer solutions for customers, ensuring a seamless and efficient customer experience.

We emphasize the importance of providing the right customer and employee experience to serve customers. Zoom IQ, an AI-based platform that helps salespeople improve their skills by listening to conversations and providing advice. We are constantly expanding its AI stack. We have recently released several new features, such as chat compose and meeting notes, to enhance customer experience. The company's focus on AI and customer service is crucial for a successful business. How much more productive can we be when we can actually collaborate? As AI can take notes for a meeting when the employee decides to brainstorm instead of taking notes during the meeting.

And then I think the last thing is about Toggle tax. Zoom's development platform allows customers to integrate Zoom's power into their applications. Currently, users can make phone calls directly from their CRM, such as Salesforce, without having to navigate to their CRM and find a phone number in another application. This eliminates the need to navigate to different applications for calls.

Zoom's marketplace allows developers to integrate their applications with the platform, making it a customer choice. This allows developers to incorporate Zoom functionality into their applications, creating a seamless working experience. The Zoom platform offers a stage for seamless integration, ensuring integration of various applications.

Nikhil: Oh, absolutely. Gary. Couldn't agree with you more. We align with a philosophy that employees should focus on the flow of work rather than the flow of information from one technology to another. The end user journeys, when we envision them from let's say a hire-to-retire perspective, we identify all technology touch points for end users and strive to make them seamless. Our endeavor is to make workplaces more inclusive and sustainable, focusing on making them more efficient and effective.

Workplace leaders are being tasked with driving diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; how can they use technology to promote it? Moving on, Gary, please share with us some thoughts on the power of connected workplaces and the potential of the strategic partnership between Zoom and HCLTech.

Gary: I think HCLTech acknowledges Zoom's rapid innovation in various business solutions, including meetings, contact centers, and AI. We aim to address different UCaaS workloads and consider this as a suitable way to integrate Zoom's technology solutions into your portfolio. To simplify the technology stack for clients, a modern cloud-based solution is essential. Reducing Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) is crucial for increasing innovation and customer satisfaction. By providing rationalization, both companies can reduce TCO and offer better services to their customers.

We have the whole platform of solutions and dozens of integrated applications, which we can integrate with other workloads. Most customers generally use Salesforce, ServiceNow, and maybe even Oracle. Now HCLTech will have the capability to provide that managed service support and governance but with a continuous innovation curve.

And I think the last thing is scale. Both companies have been leaders in our respective spaces for the last few years, and I think by joining forces now, we can help each other deliver that best-in-class collaboration and experience, which enterprises no longer require but just demand. So, the question is how do we drive that XLA across the whole board?

Nikhil: Rakshit, please share with us some thoughts about the power of connected workplaces and the potential of the Zoom and HCLTech partnership.

Rakshit: Excellent question. Especially for me, a smart connected workplace model starts with employee feedback and ends with the employee experience. Smart connected workplace blurs the line between homes and workplaces, and it's more likely for the latter to blend into the former. Organizational culture needs to take this into account.

Smart-connected workplaces also foster sustainability. In our recent survey with Fortune Brand Studio of 200 plus executives, more than 90% of executives cited sustainable work models as one of their top priorities. Our connected workplace offering jointly developed between HCLTech and Zoom has the vision to empower individuals, teams, and organizations to deliver sustained business value through powerful communication and collaboration technologies.

We have been a pioneer in digital workplace services with a focused approach. And Zoom, which has an engagement platform that is built for experience and simplicity, is a natural fit to create truly collaborative workplaces. This alliance marks a significant milestone in our commitment to revolutionize the digital workplace, shape the future of work, and enhance unified communication as a service and customer experience-based solutions such as Contact Center as a service. HCLTech and Zoom, the strategic partnership brings together the best of HCLTech's strength, scale, and understanding of the digital workplace arena and Zoom's rapid innovation for our clients to create workplaces that truly transcend the boundaries of hybrid working.

Thank you, Rakshit and Gary. Thanks for sharing these thoughts.

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