

VISUAL COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS BEST PRACTICES:

Global Report and Recommendations

July 2012 | Author: Filigree Consulting

Respondents at the highest level of collaboration maturity are up to **five times more likely to gain positive impact** on a range of business outcomes than those at the lowest level of maturity.

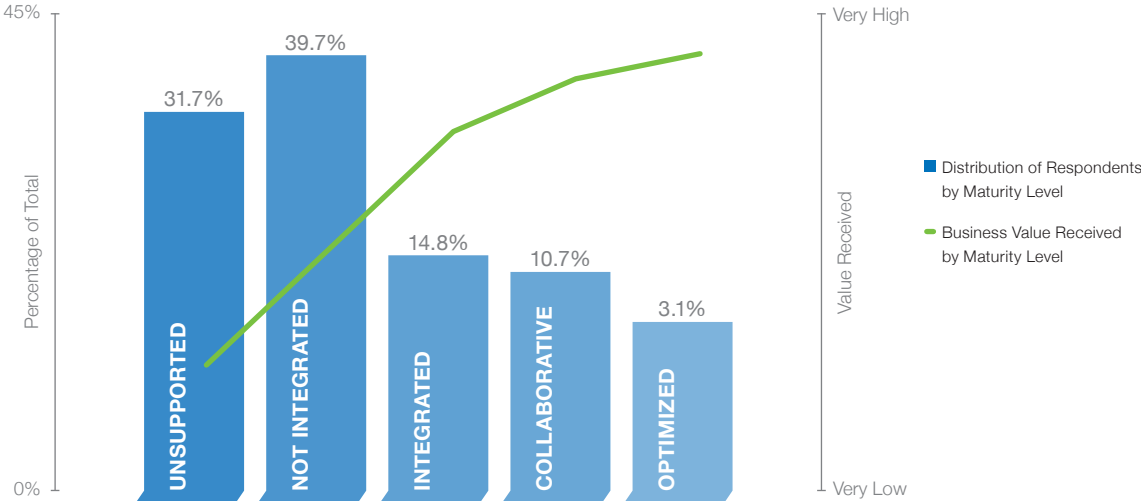
Executive summary

SMART Technologies recently commissioned a global research study to get a better understanding of customer value as it relates to their investment in collaboration. The primary goal was to determine if companies experienced value differently, depending on their approach to implementing collaboration. The core finding was that companies that implement a strategy that includes integrated solutions, processes and training will receive value that exceeds expectations in the form of reduced expenses, improved quality, reduced risk and increased business agility.

Collaboration is no longer just a term to describe a form of group interaction. It is evolving to become a strategy leveraged by executives with a vision to transform their corporate culture. Their goal is to help teams work differently so they can be more engaged and productive.

A key finding is that there is a continuum of maturity that reflects how organizations approach collaboration. Organizations that attain the highest level of maturity score the highest across all best practices. More importantly, they are up to five times more likely to gain positive impact on a range of business outcomes compared to those at the lowest level of maturity.

The chart below shows the distribution of maturity levels and the value received. Results showed 71.4% of respondents were at the unsupported or not integrated levels and achieved low to moderate value from their collaboration technology. The other 28.6% were at the integrated, collaborative or optimized levels and experienced better than expected value on specific outcomes such as reduced expenses, better quality, lower risk and improved productivity.



There are five stages along this maturity continuum

UNSUPPORTED – There is no collaboration strategy in place and the organization has little technology available to support team work.

NOT INTEGRATED – The organization is experimenting with technology but does not have a collaboration strategy. It's implementing basic technology for which there's little integration between hardware, software and other systems. Price is a primary consideration.

INTEGRATED – The organization believes in collaboration, so it implements solutions that integrate hardware, software and other systems. However, these collaboration environments are not available to everyone nor is there strategy around training and processes.

COLLABORATIVE – A collaboration strategy is in place that includes integrated solutions, training and processes. However, solutions are not fully deployed, so the full range of informal, structured, formal and dispersed collaboration is not available to everyone.

OPTIMIZED – The organization transformed the way it works with a complete implementation of solutions, services and processes. It created a range of informal, structured, formal and dispersed collaboration environments to optimize its value from collaboration.

DEFINING COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS

Collaboration solutions are considered to be any technology products, software and services that support the process of collaborative working, learning or interacting, whether between colleagues in the same room or across multiple remote locations.

While the best-known examples are videoconferencing, audio conferencing and interactive whiteboard technology, a new concept of 'visual collaboration solutions' is emerging.

Visual collaboration solutions provide a fully integrated package that encompasses interactive displays, collaboration software, remote collaboration options, services, training, and compatibility with other industry-leading software tools.

COLLABORATION MATURITY ASSESSMENT

To help business decision-makers and executives leverage this research, an online self-assessment is available. Use the assessment tool to determine your organization's maturity ranking and performance against industry best practices. The results of your assessment will include a report highlighting opportunities for improvement.

The SMART's self-assessment tool is available at smarttech.com/assessment42.

Organizations at optimized levels have transformed the way they work by **implementing a complete collaboration solution** that includes services, processes and best practices.

The Impact of Collaboration Best Practices

The research study found that richly integrated collaboration solutions along with supporting services and processes that leverage best practices can improve quality, agility and productivity, and reduce expenses and risks.

The impact of visual collaboration solutions and best practices can be seen in five areas:

- Better ideation
- Enhanced synthesis and problem solving
- Improved decision-making
- Promotes more action
- Stronger and more engaged teams

At the highest levels of maturity

90%

reported the value exceeded their expectations

90%

reported the value from collaboration solutions exceeded the value from other technology investments

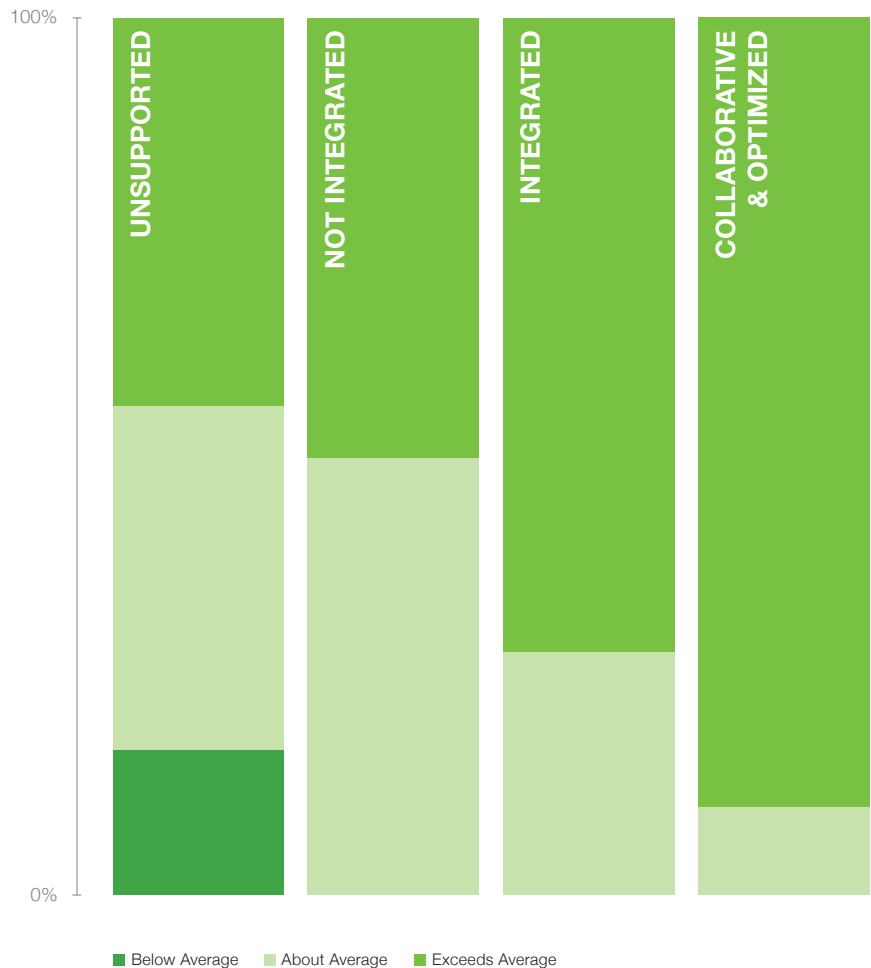
High impact results

COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND PRACTICES DIRECTLY RELATE TO VALUE

The graph below depicts the relationship between maturity (as a function of technology adoption and best practices performance) and the value from collaboration solutions as compared to other technology investments.

Essentially, organizations at lower levels of maturity achieve less value and those at higher levels of maturity achieve higher value:

- At the unsupported level, only 45% of participants reported value above average, compared to other technology investments, while 16% reported value below average, compared to other technology investments.
- At the integrated level of maturity, 72% reported value exceeding the average, compared to other technology investments.
- At the highest levels of maturity, 90% reported value exceeding the average, compared to other technology investments. Furthermore, 30% reported value that significantly exceeded the average.



Participants at the highest levels of maturity are **1.6 to 5.3 times more likely to gain positive impact** on a range of outcomes.

OUTCOMES ARE POSITIVELY IMPACTED WHEN TECHNOLOGY AND BEST PRACTICES ARE COMBINED

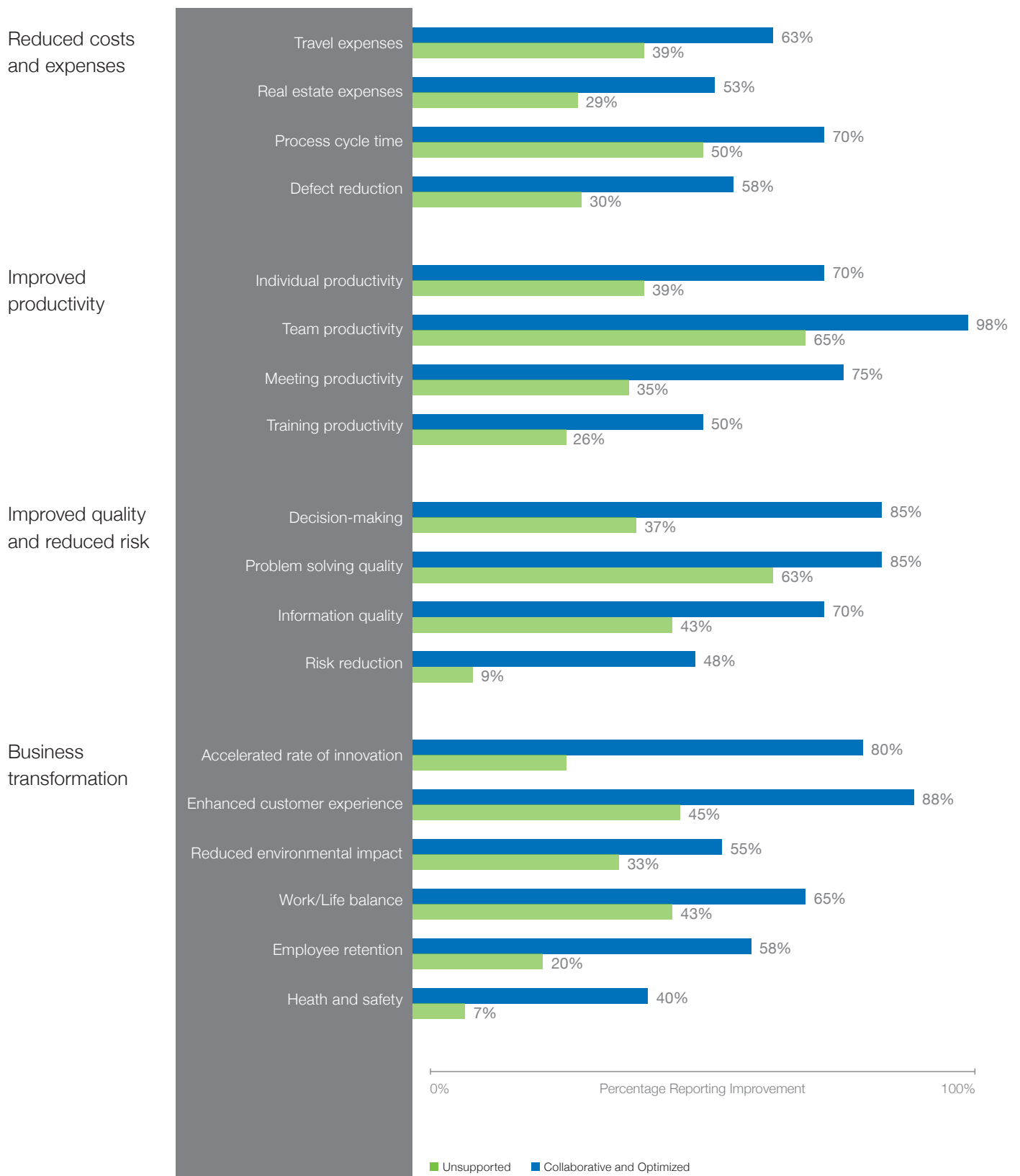
The most significant conclusion here is that when organizations add more high-quality, integrated collaboration technology and improve their practices with regard to collaboration, they get better results – both in value and in specific outcomes.

Participants at the highest levels of maturity between 1.6 and 5.3 times more likely to gain positive impact on the following outcomes, compared to participants at lower levels of maturity:

- Accelerated rate of innovation (3.1 times more impact)
- Faster and more informed decision-making (2.3 times more impact)
- Meeting productivity (length, participant satisfaction) (2.2 times more impact)
- Risk reduction (5.3 times more impact)

Organizations indicated they would benefit from setting up a **range of collaboration environments.**

BUSINESS OUTCOMES AND MATURITY GAINS



The Impact of Collaboration Best Practices

The research study measured performance on twenty-seven best practices* and the impact they have on an organization's success.

The chart below is an analysis of the overall performance and impact of the practices. It groups the practices into four quadrants based on the relationship between how participants rated their performance on a specific best practice and how important they considered that practice to be to their organization.



The area of the quadrant to focus on is the low performance / high impact section (bottom right). This section is important because these best practices offer high value but are practices for which respondents reported low performance

* See appendix for descriptions of all 27 best practices.

HIGH-VALUE COLLABORATION PRACTICES

USABLE RESULTS	This refers to being able to capture and automatically share the results of a collaboration session, in a format that can be edited and used at a later date.
DISPERSED COLLABORATION SPACES	This refers to establishing environments with integrated technology to support remote/dispersed team members.
UTILIZE INFORMAL COLLABORATION	This refers to taking advantage of the power of informal collaboration as a way to cultivate and capture a new impromptu idea.
STRUCTURED COLLABORATION SPACE	This refers to establishing environments with integrated technology to support structured problem-solving and design work (cultivating ideas into action).
COLLABORATION STRATEGY	This refers to implementing collaborative solutions, processes, training and best practices with intent, and in a planned organization wide rollout.
EASY SET-UP	This is about being able to walk into a collaboration space and have the technology ready to use and connect to remote participants.
FORMAL COLLABORATION SPACE	This refers to establishing environments with integrated technology to support decision-making and important communication with external audiences.

A theme that emerges is respondents see high value in having a range of collaboration environments (e.g., informal, formal, structured and dispersed) but rate their performance as low on these best practices. One conclusion to draw is organizations should consider a collaboration strategy that produces this range of environments in order to better support the outcomes required from each style of collaboration.

Role Impacts View of Collaboration

An analysis of best practice performance by types of functions, industries and company size was completed as part of the research.

- The comparison of practice performance by function indicates that there appears to be a lack of alignment between users and IT/facilities planners. This may indicate that IT has an incomplete understanding of user needs and requirements.
- Individuals in management roles generally rate performance higher than their staff.
- Industry comparison shows government lagging in performance compared to other industries.
- Small organizations lag on several practices.

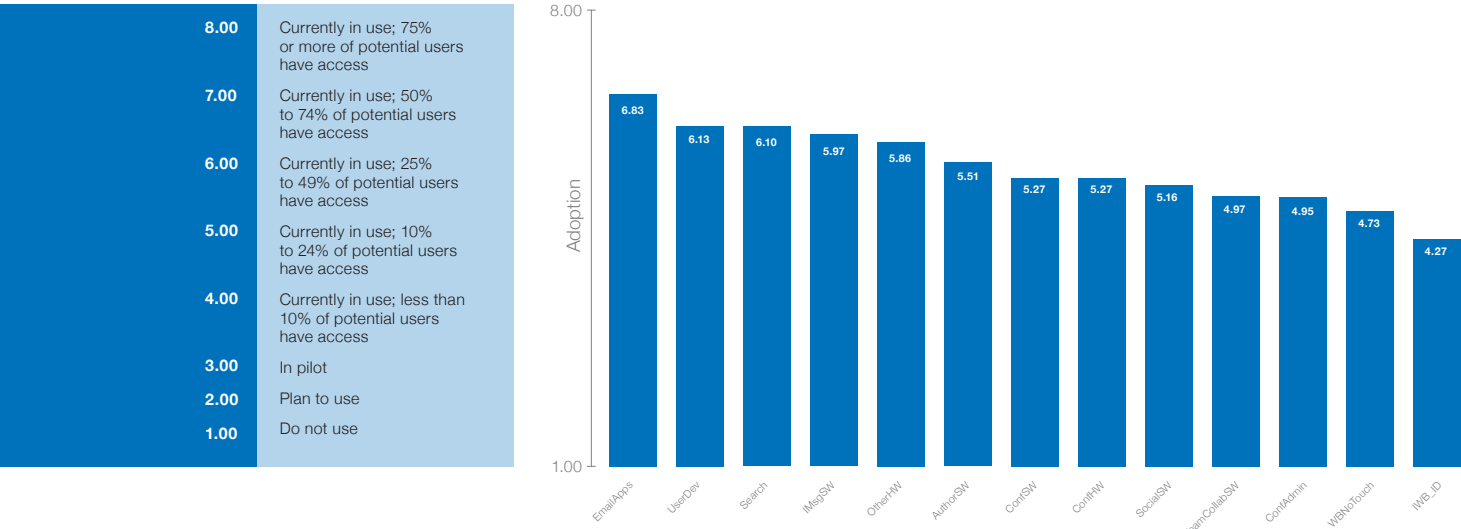
What these findings suggest is that each organization should consider these nuances in terms of function, size and industry when developing its collaboration strategy. Taking the SMART Collaboration Maturity Assessment at smarttech.com/assessment42 will help you understand these specific nuances in more detail.

Respondents see high value in terms of having a range of collaboration environments but rate their performance as low on these best practices.

IBM's latest global CEO study ranked collaboration as the **number one** trait CEOs seek in new employees.

Technology Adoption and Penetration

The adoption and penetration of 13 technologies were tested in the research. The chart below contains the average adoption rating for all respondents. Adoption was measured on an eight-point scale ranging from “do not use” to “more than 75% of potential users have access”. Therefore, adoption not only measures basic adoption but includes the concept of user base penetration.



Of the 13 technologies analyzed for adoption, email, user devices (PC, phone, tablet, etc.) and search have the highest level of adoption. The adoption levels are lower for interactive whiteboards and displays, with touch and without touch.

The technologies that involve one-to-many asynchronous interactions (e.g., e-mail, messaging) have higher adoption rates than many-to-many synchronous interaction methods (e.g., collaboration software). As the collaborative culture quickly evolves, we can expect a higher adoption rate for interactive methods that support real-time communication and information sharing among many people at the same time. These methods include interactive whiteboards and displays with integrated software.

Recently, IBM's latest global CEO study* ranked collaboration as the number one trait that CEOs seek in new employees as part of their efforts to create a more collaborative culture.

*Source: IBM C-Suite Studies (2012) Leading Through Connections; Insights from the Global Chief Executive Officer Study. Retrieved from <http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/en/c-suite/ceostudy2012/>

Over 50% of the value achieved by using technology comes from software.

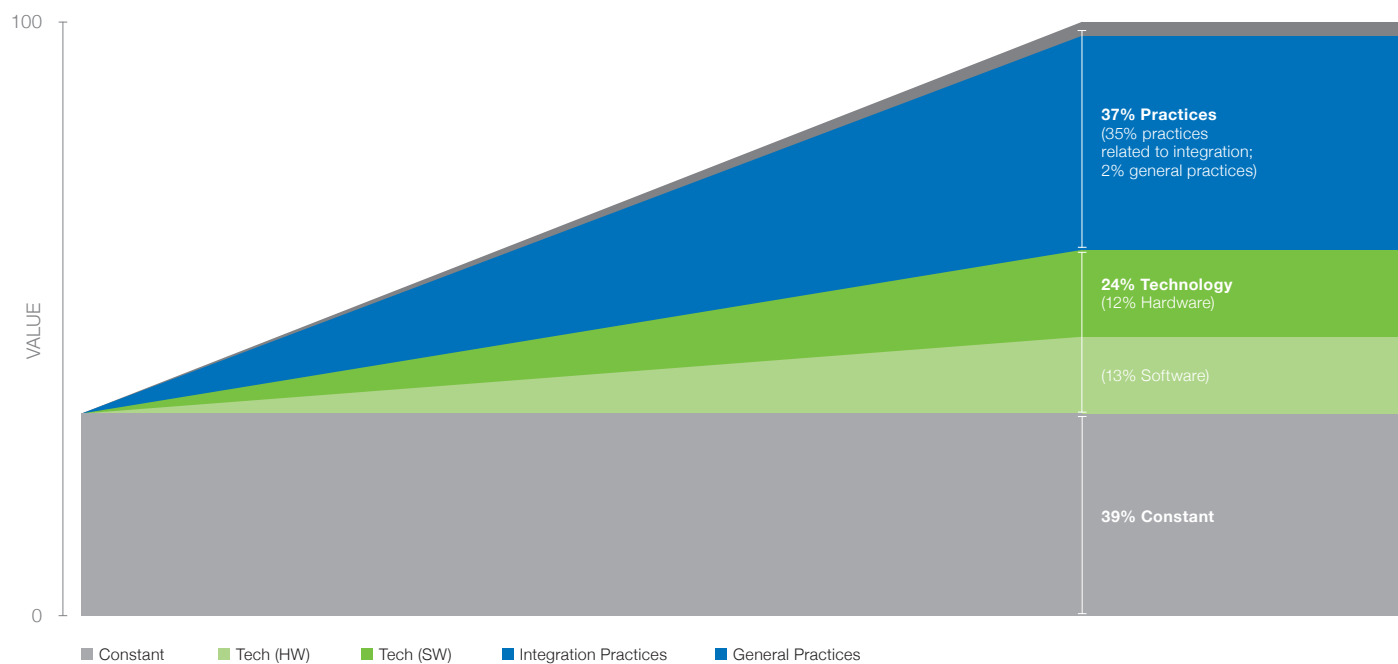
Technology adoption and best practices – contribution to value

The research illustrates that when organizations add high-quality, integrated collaboration technologies and improve their practices with regard to using collaboration solutions, they get dramatically better results – both in value and in specific outcomes (reduced expense, reduced risk, improved quality, and agility).

There is a complex, non-linear and multidimensional relationship between the components of collaboration technology, best practices and value.

The chart below indicates that:

- At high levels of maturity, technology drives about 24% of the value achieved, best practices about 37% and the balance (39%) is from extraneous variables.
- Within the technology portion, the impact of software (13%) slightly exceeds hardware (12%) in terms of value.



Organizations should strive for an optimal level of maturity, achieved by having a strategy that combines **integrated solutions with services and processes to support best practices.**

Research Recommendations

The research shows that to maximize the value of collaboration, the following points should be considered:

- Collaborative technology and practices directly relate to value
- Outcomes are positively impacted when technology and best practices are combined
- In general, businesses and governmental organizations are at different levels of maturity, with only a small number (3%) at the highest level of maturity
- Technology adoption and best practices make important contributions to value

In conclusion, the research findings show that it is possible to drive great results from collaboration solutions, however success depends on an organization's maturity level. To obtain maximum value, organizations should strive for an optimal level of maturity. This is achieved through a strategy that combines integrated technology solutions with services and processes that support a range of best practices. It is also important for that strategy to support the roll-out of collaboration solutions across the entire organization, along with a range of collaboration environments.

Next Steps and Further Research

To help business users, decision-makers and executives leverage this innovative research an online self-assessment is available. If you are interested in assessing your organization, the self-assessment tool is available at smarttech.com/assessment42.

Research Methodology and Demographics

SMART Technologies commissioned the research study to get a better understanding of customer value as it relates to the investment in collaboration technology. The study was conducted by Filigree Consulting who collaborated on the development of objectives, hypotheses, instrumentation and synthesis of the research results. The qualitative research included the development of questions about best practices through many in-depth interviews, site visits and group discussions. As part of the qualitative research, the concept of “value” was also explored. This was immediately translated into important measurable outcomes such as reduced expenses, improved quality, reduced risk and increased business.

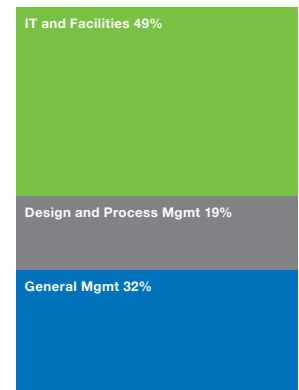
The quantitative study about collaboration technology, best practices and measurable outcomes involved collecting input from more than 350 participants from around the world, with a broad base of job functions, levels, company sizes and industry types. A panel approach was used for the majority of the data collection. After filtering to remove outliers and incomplete records, 290 responses were used in the analysis.

The following charts depict the demographics of the sample:

JOB FUNCTION

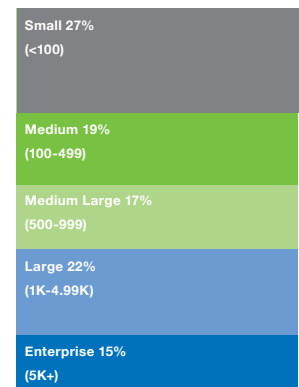
The study included job functions in several categories (and as text information) and were grouped as follows:

- Design and process management 19% of the sample includes research and development, design, project management, etc.
- General management (32%) includes human resources, financial and sales and marketing functions
- IT and Facilities (49%) includes information technology, facilities and real estate



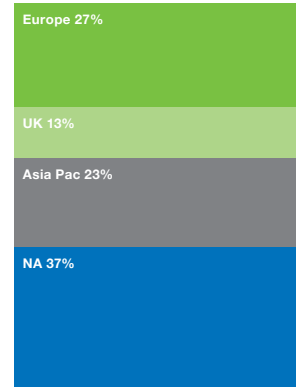
SIZE OF ORGANIZATION

The chart at the right shows the distribution of survey participants based on the size of organization they were employed with. There is good representation (and sufficient sample size for comparisons) in all groups.



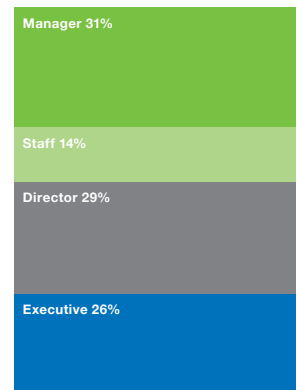
REGION

The distribution of the global sample was as follows: North America was 37% of the sample (93% of that from the USA). 23% of the sample was from Asia (72% China). Europe was 27% (about 60% from Western Europe). The UK represented 13% of the sample. The UK was broken out of the European responses in the analysis due to substantial differences between the UK and the rest of Europe in practices performance.



JOB LEVEL

Executives (VP or C-Level) make up 16% of the sample. The majority of the executive group is C-level; only ¼ of the executives are VP level. The balance is composed of directors (29%), managers (31%) and staff (14%). This broad representation has allowed the ability to look at differences in perception about practices across all levels of management and staff.



INDUSTRY

Industries were grouped into three collections based on their propensity to build things (and thus have design and process management needs), general business (57%) and government 18%).

