

# Sharpening Your Competitive Edge With Intelligent Collaboration



**WHEN EMPLOYEES DREAD** working together, it might be because outdated tools are getting in their way. Replacing those tools with unified communications and collaboration (UCC) technology driven by artificial intelligence (AI) can help people get more done—not just while they’re working together, but before and after, too.

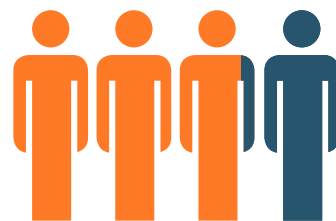
A recent survey by IDG\* shows that IT leaders who have either adopted AI tools or are planning to do so are overwhelmingly positive about the technology’s potential. In fact, more than half the organizations surveyed are already using AI-enabled technology to enhance their agility, efficiency, and speed in areas ranging from operations to customer service. The survey suggests that extending AI to communication and collaboration will make it easier to share information simply, seamlessly, and intelligently—and replace time-wasting drudgery with more impactful interactions that bring end users closer to their goals.

## The promise of AI

In surveying IT leaders who had already expressed an interest in AI, IDG found that nearly three out of four (71%) are already committed to using AI-enabled tools such as virtual assistants, natural language processing, and predictive alerts. More than half (51%) have already deployed them somewhere in their organization, and another 20% are actively planning to do so in the next 12 months. The remaining 28% are researching how to incorporate these tools into their business.

Behind this strong push to implement AI is widespread hope for its potential to transform the business. Indeed, the majority (83%) of IT leaders say they feel positive about AI, with more than a third (36%) expressing enthusiasm and another 47% describing themselves as cautiously optimistic. Unsurprisingly, technology companies are significantly more likely than other verticals to have already adopted AI tools, and to express enthusiasm for them.

Nearly  
**3 out of 4**  
respondents are  
already committed to  
**using AI**



Companies that already have AI technology in place are most commonly using it to improve their ability to spot both opportunities and threats. Across industry verticals, more than a third (37%) use AI tools to improve daily operations, and about one in three use them to enhance cybersecurity (32%), research and development (32%), and customer service (31%).

Whether respondents have already deployed AI tools or are still in the planning or research stage, they consistently expressed their hope that AI will help them to boost the efficiency and agility of their organization in order to gain a competitive advantage. More than half (58%) say their interest in AI comes from the need to modernize and streamline the business, while 50% cite the need to keep up with industry competitors.

But external pressures aren't the only driver of interest in AI. IT leaders also say they're attracted to its potential for meeting the expectations and needs of the users within their business. More than a third specifically call out end-user demands for new technologies (36%) and the need for greater accuracy and speed in making decisions (35%).

Survey respondents are distinctly optimistic that AI will help them meet those needs. Indeed, an overwhelming 79% agree that AI technology will help end users save time and get more done during their workday. Three-quarters also say that it will help end users be more productive in accomplishing their day-to-day tasks (74%) and, furthermore, that it will help the IT department gather better data to make more informed decisions about the tools end users are using and the ultimate impact of those tools on the business (74%).

## Top benefits that IT leaders and end users expect from AI



The majority of respondents also agree that AI tools will specifically enhance productivity and collaboration, with more than two-thirds saying AI technology will accelerate the co-creation process (68%) and help teams engage more spontaneously and continuously (65%).

Finally, a notable 63% specifically agreed that AI, in conjunction with voice recognition and analytics, will eliminate the drudgery that all too often defines the meeting experience. This response suggests that UCC is an area of enormous potential for AI and machine learning, a suggestion validated by the second half of the survey.

"At the heart of any successful organization is clear and consistent communication and always-on collaboration," says Mark Strassman, Senior Vice President and General Manager for Unified Communications & Collaboration at LogMeIn. "Innovative, flexible UCC technologies that put the user needs first is business critical. Development in AI presents an immense opportunity for end-users to have smarter, more meaningful interactions and ultimately get more done in their workday."

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Mark Strassman  
Senior VP and General Manager  
for Unified Communications &  
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# 63%

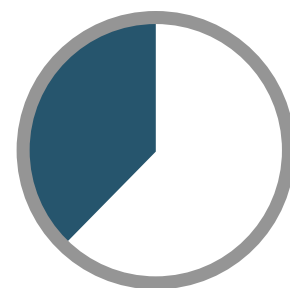
of respondents say that AI, in conjunction with voice recognition and analytics, will **eliminate the drudgery of meetings.**

## AI in the meeting room

Although survey respondents seem to understand that communication and collaboration are as ripe for AI-led disruption as any other part of the business, relatively few have actually acted on that understanding so far. However, this seems to be on the verge of a significant shift, as communication and collaboration is one of the top three areas in which respondents plan to implement AI in the next year.

Overall, 15% of respondents are already using AI tools to augment communication/collaboration, and another 19% cite it as a priority for the coming year, indicating that roughly one in three (34%) respondents will be using AI in their meetings 12 months from now. This growth will be even more pronounced in the technology vertical, with 15% currently using AI-enhanced communication/collaboration tools, and 27% planning to implement them in the coming year, for a total of 41% of tech respondents in a year's time. In addition, technology companies specifically cite their interest in voice recognition and analytics, two areas of AI functionality that are particularly relevant to meetings.

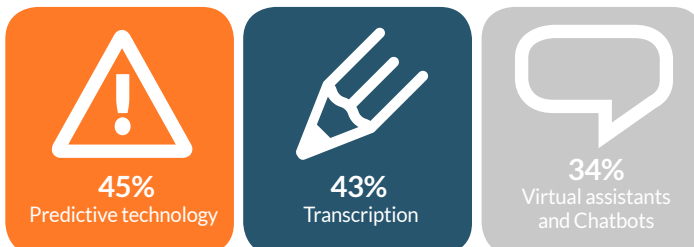
Three AI-enabled technologies emerged as having the most potential value for helping respondents make meetings more productive: predictive technology that alerts users to upcoming meetings, reminds them of tasks, and suggests follow-ups (45%); the ability to record and transcribe meeting notes (43%); and virtual assistants and chatbots (34%). Among companies with fewer than 5,000 employees, though, automatic recording and transcription was seen as the most valuable functionality. Meanwhile, technology companies prioritized automated help from AI assistants.



# 34%

1 in 3 respondents expect to  
be using AI in their meetings  
**just 12 months  
from now**

### Technologies with highest potential to make meetings more productive



Overall, only about one in five respondents are currently using AI to make meetings more productive, but they are exploring multiple uses of the technology: 22% are using predictive meeting reminders; 22% are using automated meeting note transcription; 21% are using predictive technology that informs users of upcoming meetings and tasks and suggests ways to follow up; and 21% are using virtual assistants and chatbots. In the technology vertical, however, these numbers are significantly higher, with 90% using at least one of these tools.

The minority already using AI to improve their meeting experience say it helps them use data better in less time to achieve higher-quality outcomes. Overall, respondents say the top benefits they derive are increased productivity, faster decision-making, and an improved competitive position (the main benefit among technology respondents).

## Priorities and best practices

IT leaders report that their top priorities in evaluating AI-enabled communication/collaboration solutions are integration (47%) and security (39%) capabilities to ensure their new technologies work smoothly and securely with their legacy systems. This makes sense: few organizations are willing or able to upgrade or replace all or most other existing systems for the sake of better communication, no matter what benefits a new communication/collaboration solution might provide.

Tech companies, however, prioritize a solution that reduces the support needs of end users. Given that these IT leaders also perceive virtual assistants/chatbots as the most valuable way an AI-enabled communications solution can make meetings more productive, this response suggests that they want a solution that enables end users to set up and conduct meetings, retrieve information, and perform tasks like recording and transcribing conversations with little or no IT intervention. It also suggests the value of a solution with centralized control and management, which simplifies provisioning and facilitates user management by making it easier to customize end-user controls and features. By increasing self-service and reducing support needs, a solution with these features frees IT to focus on more strategic responsibilities than meeting management.

An enterprise-grade communication and collaboration tool with AI capabilities should be able to meet all of these requirements while also delivering AI innovations that make it easier for users to find, digest, and share key content. Among those innovations should be predictive technology that reminds end users of upcoming meetings/tasks and suggests appropriate next steps, as well as a smart meeting assistant that automatically records meetings, transcribes the recording, and searches the transcription for information that needs to be shared.

AI is the future of collaboration, and it's clear why so many technology decision makers are realizing the potential for AI to enhance meetings and make them more productive and enjoyable. Outdated technologies will increasingly be replaced by more intuitive tech that allows employees to collaborate in a meeting, and after the event is over for a truly seamless experience.

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\*Survey asked 150 qualified respondents working in an IT-related function at the manager level or above, at a company with 100 or more employees. Respondents' companies were using AI-enabled technology, planning to adopt, or had an interest incorporating AI into their business.

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