



The 'Experience Economy'

How Will it Impact Your IT Team?

In July and September of 2019, Poly and Ecosystem conducted Roundtables for key IT decision makers from some of the leading organisations in Australia to discuss the evolving dynamics in the workplace and the implications for IT when embarking on an initiative to drive Employee Experience (EX).

PUBLISHED:
October 2019

REPORT AUTHOR:
Audrey William,
Principal Advisor
Ecosystem



Executive Summary

The workplace has changed dynamically in the past few years and will continue to evolve as employees take ownership of how they wish to communicate and collaborate on the job. It has become a norm today for the new generation of workers to expect the best-in-class applications and workplace tools for daily collaboration. The IT department will be hard pressed to implement these collaboration technologies, improve employee experience (EX) and handle the associated security concerns.

Key IT decision makers from some of the leading organisations in Australia came together in July and September 2019, to discuss the evolving dynamics in the workplace and the implications for IT when embarking on an initiative to drive EX. This report discusses the key discussion points that emerged from the 4 sessions held in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The data findings used in the report are from the multiple Ecosystem studies that are live and ongoing on the Ecosystem platform.

Key Takeaways from the 4 Engaging Roundtables in Australia

The Experience Economy Shaping the Workplace of the Future

THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Organisations today are dealing with multiple generations working within one organisation. This means that IT teams will have to cater to the different types of worker demands especially from the millennials and Gen Z. Organisations today for instance, have workers who are comfortable with using the more basic daily communication technologies, and at the other end of the spectrum there are those that prefer to use apps that are simple and helps them get the tasks done easier. We live and work in an "Experience Economy". For instance, WhatsApp although not a formal channel used for office communication, has become a common application for calls and messaging. IT teams may have provisioned the usage of other voice, video and collaboration applications but if the employees do not like the experience, they will move to the platform of their choice.

THE FREELANCE/GIG ECONOMY

A new shift is taking place in the workplace globally and the advent of part-time or contract workers are on the rise. About 2.5 million Australians are now employed on a casual basis, according to The Australian Bureau of Statistics. That is more than a quarter of the workforce, up from 13 per cent in 1990s. That number is rising steadily and these are just some of the trends that indicate that the freelance economy is here to stay. In the workplace, it means providing the right set up when a contractor or casual worker joins the organisation. This includes setting the employees up on their laptop, getting them the right applications needed for daily office collaboration and ensuring that they are given the same experience as full-time employees so that they can fulfil their responsibilities.



The Impact of the Experience Economy on IT

1 THE NEED FOR A MOBILE FIRST STRATEGY

75% OF AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATIONS HAVE A MOBILE FIRST STRATEGY IN PLACE - 20% OF ORGANISATIONS ARE IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

As organisations adopt a Mobile First strategy, they are designing an online experience for Mobile users before designing it for the desktop/Web. This is a paradigm shift from the past, where enterprises modified or adapted their websites, business processes and digital means of communications, to fit Mobile users. Mobile First application designs take into consideration that Mobile users are constantly on the move. Information needs to be presented to them on smaller screens/displays with multi-media interfaces (voice/video), and multiple network connectivity options (Wi-Fi, cellular, and so on).

Developing a strategy centred on mobile device and application will be critical. Having a Mobile First strategy - incorporating all forms of voice, collaboration and video applications on smart mobile apps - cannot be ignored. Making sure that the casual workers and the part-timers have the same experience as full-time employees when it comes to document sharing, voice calls, video conferencing and collaboration is also important so that they feel like they are part of the organisation.

#2 THE EMERGENCE OF CLOUD COLLABORATION

66% OF AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATIONS ADOPTING CLOUD SOLUTIONS CONSIDER COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION SHARING AS A KEY BENEFIT

The Australia market is witnessing an explosive growth of cloud videoconferencing usage and this has been driven by the need to collaborate effectively and work from a laptop or mobile device in a non-cumbersome manner. The market is also seeing new cloud video vendors address the issues around ease of use, a solid user design and the ability to have workflows integrated well into the platform. As the number of remote workers increase, providing a seamless videoconferencing including the audio experience is vital. If the employee finds video cumbersome to use, they will not use the technology. If they find that the video experience has been poor due to latency or poor audio quality, they will opt to use their mobile device or the video bridge for a voice call and not turn on the video session. In the Experience Economy, "user experience" is everything.

The popularity of solutions such as Microsoft Teams is linked to the need for workplace collaboration. Organisations that have adopted Teams shared how the results have been positive in terms of using one platform for chat, collaboration, sharing documents, making voice and video calls and collaborating daily without the need to use email. The adoption of Teams has seen success when it has been adopted company wide and has become part of the organisation's culture. Solutions should not be adopted in silos.

While the desktop and mobile experience is becoming significant, there will still be a need to cater for board meetings and other large group meetings and hence the room experience is still important. There is still a need for private cubicles fitted out with videoconferencing solutions. Huddle rooms are on the rise and not every conversation will be from the desktop or the mobile device. Therefore, IT will have to juggle the different personas in the organisation on their video usage preferences and cater for a wide spectrum of videoconferencing technologies.



#3 IMPROVING EX IN OPEN OFFICES AND CO-WORKING SPACES

41% OF AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATIONS CONSIDER IMPROVING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE A TOP BUSINESS PRIORITY

Whilst the growth in co-working spaces sounds promising, the issues around having workers wanting more privacy and quiet spaces has also become a reality. Without private rooms and quiet spaces, office workers are struggling to get work done and some have opted to work from home or take calls in spaces outside the building or even in a car! Handling issues surrounding noise and distractions were stressed as growing issues in co-working spaces. A few organisations have had to invest in more private rooms or cubicles to cater to complaints from workers. Investments in quality headsets to eradicate this problem has emerged as a solution. Investing in headsets must also be thought about carefully given the different types of workers with different personas - there is no 'one size fits all' for headsets.

It is not just the start-ups and mid-size companies that will have to embrace these issues - large organisations in Australia are moving towards co-working spaces as well. This is proving to be a challenge for IT and HR when it comes to employee retention. Should more private cubicles be built? What floor plans would work best? How much should be invested in quality headsets? How can workers work effectively whether at their desk, at home or out of the office?

Organisations with an in-house contact centre also brought up the concerns around agent attrition. It is estimated that the tenure of an agent is somewhere between 2-5 years. In some organisations, agents last only a few months. Coping with lengthy hours on the phone and putting up with customer complaints can be a difficult task. Contact centres are investing heavily in training and coaching programs, providing reward systems to compensate agents well, and providing good working conditions (right chair, desk, tools for working, good CX applications that are easy to use, good quality headsets enabling them to be on the phone longer, longer breaks in between calls and so on). There is enormous pressure for the IT and Contact Centre teams to address these concerns and investments towards providing the agents with the right applications as well as the right work environment is critical to agent retention.

In the end, IT can improve EX only with the right inputs - but often employees are hesitant to provide the feedback. Suggestions include developing a feedback mechanism through a mobile app or having an open platform across various channels for employees to provide their feedback to IT - in the end this would help IT address issues and employee preferences to help drive greater EX.

#4 SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE FREELANCE/GIG ECONOMY

AT 48%, MOBILE-BASED THREATS ON APPS AND INTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS THE KEY SECURITY CONCERN FOR THOSE ADOPTING MOBILITY SOLUTIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Enabling a mobile workforce requires focus on building security policies and a robust Mobile Device Management (MDM) and Mobile Application Management (MAM) policy. Providing the right connectivity for example through secured wi-fi networks will have to be thought about along with cost implications. Without proper connectivity, quality of voice and video calls for example, can be poor. Has IT done enough to cater for the contractors? What are the implications for apps and device security? How do you ensure that a contractor's experience with the company is not compromised because of the security features?

Additional concerns that need to be addressed by the IT team are: How can the office worker or the contractor address connectivity issues when taking voice and video



calls out of the office space? Who pays for the data/mobile costs when it comes to contractors? These are serious considerations when wanting to drive a seamless experience for a contract worker. With more contractors coming into the fold in the Freelance/Gig economy, these aspects cannot be ignored.

#5 WORKPLACE ANALYTICS REQUIRES IT TO BE MORE COLLABORATIVE

26% OF AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATIONS INDICATE THAT HR IS A DECISION-MAKING STAKEHOLDER IN AI/ANALYTICS IMPLEMENTATIONS

Several IT decision makers at the roundtables talked about how they were deploying workplace analytics as part of a larger transformational strategy around machine learning and AI. Workplace analytics is not something that will reside only with the IT department, but HR will want to understand trends as well - for example in analysing negative workplace behaviour and culture. Data such as hours spent on email by lines of business or by countries globally can alert HR about the geographies that have potential email or work overload. Workplace analytics can also reveal certain negative office practices such as working longer hours which could be more prevalent in some geographies. The analytics can indicate trends for HR to understand about absenteeism or workplace illnesses which can be caused from work overload. The Facilities Management department can also benefit from these data sets which can help them plan on best practices for utilising rooms, spaces and energy savings in buildings.

These are just some of the examples of how workplace analytics will generate massive amounts of data that can then be used as a way for IT, HR and Facilities Management to identify challenges and devise ways to better address them.



About Poly



Plantronics and Polycom are now [Poly](#), the global communications company that powers authentic human connection and collaboration. Their comprehensive set of smart endpoints span personal and group communication, with a full range of headsets, desk and conference phones, and video collaboration solutions. Bringing the world closer. One to one. One to many. Many to many.

About Ecosystem



e c o s y s t m

[Ecosystem](#) is a private equity backed Digital Research and Advisory Platform with global headquarters in Singapore.

As a global first, Ecosystem brings together tech buyers, tech vendors and analysts into one integrated platform to enable the best decision making in the evolving digital economy. The firm moves away from the highly inefficient business models of traditional research firms and instead focuses on research democratisation, with an emphasis on accessibility, transparency and autonomy.

Ecosystem's research originates from its custom designed "Peer-2-Peer" platform which allows Tech Buyers to benchmark their organisation in "real-time" against their industry or market.

This bold new research paradigm enables Ecosystem to provide Tech Vendors access to ongoing and real time Market Insights in an affordable "as-a-Service" subscription model.