



How Cisco IT Is Evolving Workplace Deployment and Operations for Collaborative Professionals



Introduction

Technology helps drive collaboration, but employees' work styles and preferences ultimately shape what collaboration looks like in an organization. Understanding how employees work and listening to their needs and expectations were imperatives for Cisco IT when Cisco, as a company, committed to creating a transformative workplace experience for its teams: Cisco Connected Workplace.

The design, policies, and technology of Cisco Connected Workplace are made for today's mobile, agile, and connected workforce. The development of this workplace concept is an important step in Cisco's overall collaboration journey. It also complements the continuous teamwork experience that the Cisco Webex

Teams collaboration platform makes possible. Cisco launched the workplace redesign project in 2011 and, as of December 2018, about 90 percent of the company's global real estate portfolio has been converted to the new workplace design.

Cisco IT plays a pivotal role in delivering the user-centric workspace experience of Cisco Connected Workplace—engaging with end users early in the deployment process, communicating choices, and aligning technology solutions based on employees' needs and expectations. Cisco IT constantly analyzes user data and solicits feedback so that the team can enhance solutions continuously across the deployment lifecycle.

Aligning workspaces with work styles

Cisco IT coordinates with the Cisco Workplace Resources (WPR) group to assess how employees are working and define user personas based on their work styles. Those personas range from highly mobile workers like salespeople to workstation-anchored employees such as engineers. Defining personas helps Cisco IT to determine what technology a workspace will require.

The user-centric workspaces in Cisco Connected Workplace include small, medium and large conference rooms, as well as one-person **touchdown spaces** and **quiet rooms, huddle/audio privacy/team rooms** for informal meetings or individual work, and creativity zones for employee socialization and group gatherings. Technology configurations for these rooms vary, but they can all support collaboration.

Training rooms provide more capabilities for in-room presentation than the workspaces described above. These large, flexible spaces can be used in split or combined modes, supporting 30 or 60 people. And **extra-large conference rooms** are auditorium-style, custom-designed spaces for large gatherings, trainings, and briefings. They include third-party projectors and video walls, in-ceiling microphones and speakers, wireless microphones, amplifiers, controllers, and more.

Some workspaces in Cisco Connected Workplace must remain available for sharing at all times, with no reservations permitted, so they are free for maximum collaboration.



Workspaces at Cisco are created using a “building block” approach with diverse layouts, desk styles, and meeting and socialization areas. Building blocks are combined to create “neighborhoods” for sales, marketing, customer service, engineering, and other groups. How neighborhoods are structured varies based on the work function. Engineering neighborhoods, for example, tend to have a lot of standard desks, while sales neighborhoods have more huddle rooms. Neighborhoods that frequently interact, such as sales and marketing, are placed close to each other.

For a closer look at the various Cisco workspaces, what technology and furniture they typically include, and how the workspaces can be set up, go to <https://projectworkplace.cisco.com/#/en-us/scenario/0>.

Data-Based Assessments at the Core of Video Deployments

Cisco IT takes a strategic approach when deploying technology in the user-centric workspaces of Cisco Connected Workplace. The team equips end users with the solutions they need to do their day-to-day work effectively and collaborate easily with colleagues in their office or around the world. Cisco IT fully defines the needs of each workspace before equipment and infrastructure are installed, which helps to speed deployment and maximize the return on investment for the company.

For example, while deploying video in every workspace may sound like a smart strategy to support a highly collaborative workforce like Cisco's, it's unlikely employees will utilize all of that technology. So, when

determining the optimal amount of video technology that a location requires, Cisco IT first conducts a data-based needs assessment—looking at factors such as device utilization, space type, client needs, and building occupancy, as well as the lifespan of hardware and the financial impact of refreshes.

Cisco IT scales deployments to match client demand, employing different IT deployment models based on the headcount assigned to a facility. Additionally, Cisco IT specifies that the utilization of existing video equipment at a site must meet minimum usage thresholds before incremental video investment can occur.

A trend toward more flexible video endpoints

Cisco IT also employs a more lightweight approach to deploying video in the workspaces of Cisco Connected Workplace. In the past, Cisco IT configured many meeting areas as immersive, multiscreen environments with Cisco TelePresence System (CTS) endpoints. That approach often required the complete rewiring of a room. CTS endpoints also had to be mounted to walls coated with special paint.

Now, Cisco IT equips workspaces with floor-standing video endpoints that can adapt dynamically to a room's color and lighting. Deployment and removal of endpoints are now faster, as well. Transforming a room into a center for collaboration often requires little or no remediation.



Ongoing Dedication to Support and Operational Excellence



Once collaboration workspaces are configured, and systems are deployed and in use, Cisco IT focuses on ensuring operational excellence in the following three areas:

Proactive monitoring

Cisco IT continually monitors workspaces with predictive failure analysis to identify and mitigate issues before they impact users. Proactively identifying issues in Cisco meeting spaces is a major win for Cisco IT operational success. By running daily audits across all room endpoints, Cisco IT can rapidly resolve issues such as disconnected cables and camera and codec errors. That saves precious time for end users because issues can be resolved before their work is affected. It also helps prevent employees from wasting their time trying to join a meeting on a video endpoint that is experiencing issues.

Cisco IT keeps end users informed of workspace issues through a special maintenance wallpaper update displayed on the endpoint. That notification allows employees to move quickly to another room, while Cisco IT works to resolve issues that require on-site support. Cisco IT also prevents the booking of conference rooms that are experiencing technical issues, saving employees time and frustration.

Lifecycle management

Cisco IT employs a lifecycle management approach to maximize performance and availability of Cisco Collaboration services. Key areas include adoption, version control, and capacity management. The Cisco IT team also focuses on risk and security to safeguard users and their data, and consider client sentiment as well, all the way through to service retirement.

Quarter over quarter, Cisco IT runs initiatives to identify and upgrade legacy video endpoints to next-generation offerings. Legacy devices can be a burden to both IT and the end user because version control and support can be challenging. Also, legacy endpoints do not support the latest, most advanced features, creating a disparity in experience among employees using different generations of endpoints.

Self-service support

Cisco IT offers personalized IT support capabilities through a self-service model, with an emphasis on maximizing employee productivity and enablement. The team also uses automation and large-scale service enablement to scale and accelerate support capabilities.

Cisco IT offers a one-stop portal for all collaboration needs, with information on everything from learning and training, to new announcements and ordering, to device management. Providing the necessary support and documentation in a single, easy-to-find location lets users quickly get what they need. It also minimizes support tickets: Employees now go to this portal first before opening a case, and this has helped to reduce the case count by 30 percent.

Continuous Improvement and Bottom-Line Benefits

Cisco IT continues to collect ongoing feedback from users to improve their collaboration experience. The team is supporting a rich collaboration landscape that includes 467 buildings across 96 countries and a workforce of about 140,000 people. There are more than 69,000 daily active users of Cisco Webex Teams, on average, and more than 88,500 Cisco IP phones. Only about 30 percent of the company's workspace is designated for individual use; the rest is for collaboration.

Cisco's strategy as a company to not only support but also drive workforce collaboration is paying dividends. Following are just some of the results Cisco has seen because of its ongoing collaboration journey, including the introduction of Cisco Connected Workplace and Cisco Webex Teams:

- **Improved productivity and engagement.** Employee engagement has increased by 19 percent, and workplace productivity is up 14 percent, according to a recent Cisco internal survey. Cisco estimates that the incremental productivity is worth \$811 million annually.
- **Enhanced recruiting and retention.** Cisco Connected Workplace is helping the business to attract talent. About 70 percent of new hires said collaborative technologies available at Cisco influenced their decision to join the company.
- **Greater employee satisfaction.** From 2010 to 2018, Cisco employees' self-reported satisfaction with the balance between work and non-work activities rose to 73 percent.

Collaboration is also helping Cisco to operate more sustainably. Employees in Cisco Connected Workplaces commute 1.5 fewer times per week on average than employees in traditional buildings. That reduction in travel creates 59,000 fewer tons of carbon dioxide emissions (tCO₂e) annually. Since 2011, Cisco has avoided 553,000 tCO₂e, or about 27,650 gallons of auto fuel burned.

Additionally, Cisco's global real estate costs fell 26 percent from 2012 to 2017, despite a 7 percent increase in the company's workforce. Cisco has closed 241 buildings, consolidating from 60 to 39 buildings in San Jose alone. Also, building operational expenses have dropped by \$196 million annually.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Connected Workplace, visit <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/cisco-on-cisco/connected-workplace.html>.

For information about Cisco Webex Teams, go to <https://www.webex.com/team-collaboration.html>.

To read additional Cisco IT case studies on a variety of business solutions, visit Cisco on Cisco: Inside Cisco IT: www.cisco.com/go/it.

Note

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