

Better collaboration through technology

The writing's on the wall for outdated forms of communication. Interactive whiteboards can transform collaboration in the workplace

Collaboration lies at the heart of the way business operates. Today, the latest generation of collaboration technology is playing a vital role in helping organisations to deliver more productive and efficient meetings, whether face-to-face or remotely.

For years, collaboration was supported – or arguably hindered – by a rudimentary set of tools, whether it was flip charts and dry wipe boards or, more recently, the emergence of teleconferencing, video and web-based conferencing, which deliver communication but fall short of a truly collaborative experience.

Moreover, the pressures on collaboration have grown dramatically. Businesses now handle far greater volumes of data than ever before. The demands of a globalised economy have led businesses to adopt more flexible working patterns and geographically dispersed teams that must work together. Finally, the global economic downturn has forced every business to cut costs and realise greater efficiencies.

For many leading businesses, including BT, Computacenter and Scottish Water, the technology solution that meets their collaboration needs in the face of these challenges is the SMART Board interactive whiteboard from SMART Technologies.

The SMART Board interactive whiteboard



Interactive: whiteboard enables users to highlight and annotate text

enables users to display and annotate documents, files and images in digital ink. Objects can be manipulated and highlighted, simply with a touch of the screen or the stroke of a pen, before being instantly saved and distributed. Users benefit from a far more intuitive and visually engaging collaborative process that delivers higher productivity, more creative solutions and, critically, better decisions.

Using SMART Bridgit conferencing software, SMART's interactive whiteboards

can be connected to create virtual meeting rooms where people in multiple locations can share their desktops and work on the same display, as if they were in the same room. It can also operate alongside other software and communication tools, such as video-conferencing, for a truly integrated solution.

Such a powerful collaboration tool significantly reduces the need for non-essential travel. Whether it is a sales network meeting, a staff training programme or an international strategy planning session, less

business travel means cutting your travel bill. This also makes a major contribution to delivering a fast, verifiable ROI (return on investment), as well as a lower carbon footprint.

With the ability to transform workplace collaboration, it is not surprising that businesses of all sizes are adopting SMART collaboration solutions. Indeed, SMART's interactive whiteboards have been ubiquitous in British schools for years as an education tool. Businesses now need these tools to unlock the skillset of the next generation entering the workforce; the 'net gen' who have been educated using interactive whiteboards, who have grown up using touchscreen devices and for whom virtual communication and collaboration is second nature.

The technology exists for businesses to optimise the dynamism and creativity that is generated when people work together, whether in the same room or remotely. The latest collaboration solutions are not only helping businesses to drive up productivity and save money, in the midst of the biggest global downturn for a generation, they are proving to be a business-critical tool.

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