

WHITEPAPER

Transforming Town Halls

How to engage employees and reach
the next generation of workers



The only constant is change.

The pace of change is unforgiving. Workforce demographics are transforming rapidly as Millennials and Generation Z workers emerge as the majority across the employee population. The boundaries of product innovation appear endless, as the pivots companies can pursue are driven by changes in code, not traditional manufacturing processes.

These factors, among others, are forcing CEOs to adapt and commit to significant strategy shifts. In the 2019 Gartner CEO Survey, 86% of CEO's expect to change their business model over the next 3 years and 87% expect to change their operating model. Ultimately, all of this change will be for naught if corporate leaders fail to communicate effectively with their organizations, establish strategic alignment, and inspire their teams to faithfully execute the plan.

This whitepaper presents critical insights depicting how leading organizations are leveraging next-generation town hall meetings to ignite corporate engagement and chart a course toward realizing digital transformation.

The Next-Generation of Workers

Today's workers are constantly under attack. The daily shuffle between meetings, chat, firefighting, and more is head-spinning. Given the ever-growing stream of projects, programs, and pings, it's no wonder that the [average human attention span](#) has fallen below that of a goldfish. To counter this onslaught, organizations have invested significantly in employee communications tools that work alongside a worker's daily routine, as opposed to stopping them in their tracks and knocking them off course.

Additionally, employees have driven a paradigm shift when it comes to how they want to consume information. The consumerization of technology

has reset the baseline for what end users consider acceptable in the workplace. According to Forrester Research, employees are 75% more likely to watch a video than read documents or email. Overwhelmingly, it's clear then that workers want to consume more engaging content, which is similar to what they are doing in their personal lives.

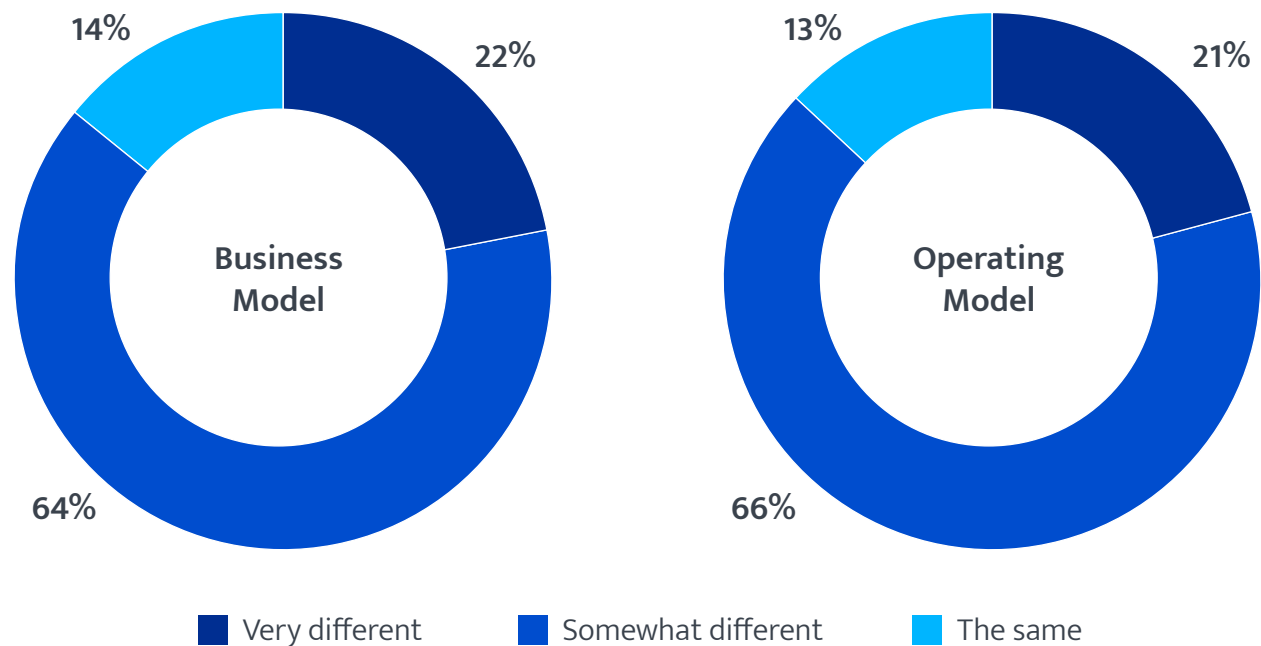
Imagine a sample of workers across your organization. Entry-level, mid-manager, all the way up to the department heads. Regardless of their function or title, the majority of these employees have the same two requirements: 1) they want to experience compelling content and 2) they want to interact with it in “social” ways.

Digital interactivity (e.g., the ability to like and comment) is an extension of our human nature to build and maintain a sense of community. As a matter of fact, a [New York Times Consumer Insights](#) survey identified that 78% of people share information online because it lets them stay connected to people they may not otherwise stay in touch with. Therefore, as organizations are globally dispersed more now than ever before, employees have a similar desire to connect with their co-workers virtually to build culture and foster a sense of community.

These insights provide a framework for communicating with the next-generation of workers. Deliver compelling video content that facilitates real-time engagement.

CEOs' Expected Change to Business and Operating Models in Three Years

By 2021, Gartner's research supports the following market trends:



n = 473, Base: All respondents, chart excludes does not apply/no opinion, Source: 2019 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey.
Q. Complete each statement with the answer you agree with the most, ID: 385368

“We are moving from a world where computing power was scarce to a place where it now is almost limitless, and where the true scarce commodity is increasingly human attention.”*

– SATYA NADELLA, CEO OF MICROSOFT

The intersection of these two approaches enables workers to best absorb and engage with information, while leaving more time for getting the day job done.

The Next-Generation of Executives

While the next-generation of front-line employees is seeking more engaging and interactive forms of communication to cut through the noise, the next-generation of business leaders are starting to understand that they need to have more empathy for employees and be more inclusive than exclusive.

According to The Wall Street Journal, 20% of employers now send managers to “empathy training.” Ultimately, the ability to facilitate a positive work culture is reshaping the future of work. Rather than any single authority calling all the shots, more executives are tuning into the needs of their workforce. Why? The perception of leadership is now evaluated based on command of culture as much as their ability to impact business performance.

The concepts introduced above parallel each other. Executives need a finger on the pulse of their employees, employees need communication transparency at every level of the organization. Since it’s not every day that both groups communicate in the same forum, organizations need to capitalize on those occasions when all parties are brought together, either digitally or physically. Ensuring strategic alignment and demonstrating positive behavior can happen most effectively during these communication flashpoints where everyone is exposed to the same information at the same time. Transforming these large-scale discussions to suit the modern workforce is essential for any growth-oriented business.

‘A’ For Effort, ‘F’ For Engagement

There’s no shortage of ineffective communication channels when it comes to corporate communications. Fundamentally, if the tools can’t scale to support the business needs, then administrators will want to rethink their communication solutions. Surprisingly,

* <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/07/microsofts-ceo-sent-a-3187-word-memo-and-we-read-it-so-you-dont-have-to/374230/>

a BlueJeans TechValidate survey revealed that 60% of respondents were in the market for a new solution because their existing tool could not accommodate large audiences.

In terms of traditional channels, newsletters, email blasts, intranet message boards — these are all tried and true methods. They can serve as the nuts and bolts for operational messages but no one dares to “reply all” and the conversation is likely over before it started. Although these posts attempt to inform recipients with a single message, they’re often sent as an editorial obligation by the department that creates the note.

Not intimate enough? Roundtable discussions, fireside chats, and brown-bag lunches — these all attempt to put the CEO in a more accessible setting. But how can these methods guarantee equal time for every department? They’re not scalable and they don’t provide a proper format to interact with the entire company at once.

Future-Proof Presentations

Interactive town halls are practiced by businesses that understand the expectations of the modern workplace. Those organizations that effectively execute these events use advanced technology to



leave a lasting impression on the audience. The purpose of corporate town halls is to create alignment across the organization and break down barriers between executives and employees.

However, the goal of motivating a massive workforce is much easier said than done. According to a recent Gallup poll, [only 22% of employees](#) strongly agree that their leadership team has provided a clear direction. For those with limited access to executives, this data isn't surprising. This puts the onus on enterprises to connect all employees and leadership teams through genuine, human-to-human interaction.

Many webcast solutions sold on the market are constrained by a 20th century broadcasting model. These offerings present only a handful of presenters to an idle crowd that is unable to participate beyond a dialogue box. This approach fails to deliver on employees' expectations to engage with content, and executives' need to properly address their workforce.

According to the same TechValidate survey, failure to deliver an interactive experience that engaged employees was among one of the most common reasons to replace an existing town hall solution. Using an unsophisticated technology leaves the workforce empty handed. It's not enough to throw the CEO in front of a camera lens — employees expect more.

BlueJeans Events: Executive Vision Meets Global Stage

Based on these workplace communication trends, BlueJeans has reacted to the voice of employees and executives simultaneously. By combining collaborative features with broadcast scalability, leadership teams can bridge knowledge gaps across the organization, any employee can actively participate, and interactive content sharing keeps all attendees focused on the speaker.

Transforming traditional town halls into a modernized virtual stage propels business objectives by allowing executives to confront skepticism of corporate culture and set the record straight on goals and strategy. Once the presenter connects the audience with compelling content — assisted by essential interactivity features — the next generation of workers are able to internalize the key messages and take the appropriate actions.

According to the same TechValidate survey, 83% of respondents experienced an improvement in organizational alignment with corporate strategy after using BlueJeans Events for town halls. If employees trust their leadership team, and if they understand the go-forward strategy, people are inclined to do their best work. Therefore, when enterprises successfully unify the entire company, productivity increases.

To learn more about BlueJeans Events, please visit:
www.bluejeans.com/products/events

About BlueJeans

The first cloud service to connect desktops, mobile devices, and room systems in one video meeting, BlueJeans makes meetings fast to join and simple to use, so people can work productively where and how they want. It is the meeting solution teams trust to do their best work.

BlueJeans Meetings

Collaborate effectively with video, audio, and web conferencing from anywhere. Instantly join, host, or manage meetings from a conference room, your desk, or a mobile device.

BlueJeans Rooms

Transform any room into an easy-to-use video conference space. Increase workforce collaboration with rooms that require little to no end-user training and provide effortless IT management.

BlueJeans Events

Host and livestream interactive events, town halls, and webinars for large audiences around the world. Engage up to 15,000 attendees with immersive video, Q&A, polling, and moderator controls.

Discover how BlueJeans modernizes meetings and makes your teams more productive.

www.bluejeans.com/trial