

broadvoice

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO COLLABORATION

FOR SMALL AND MID-MARKET BUSINESSES



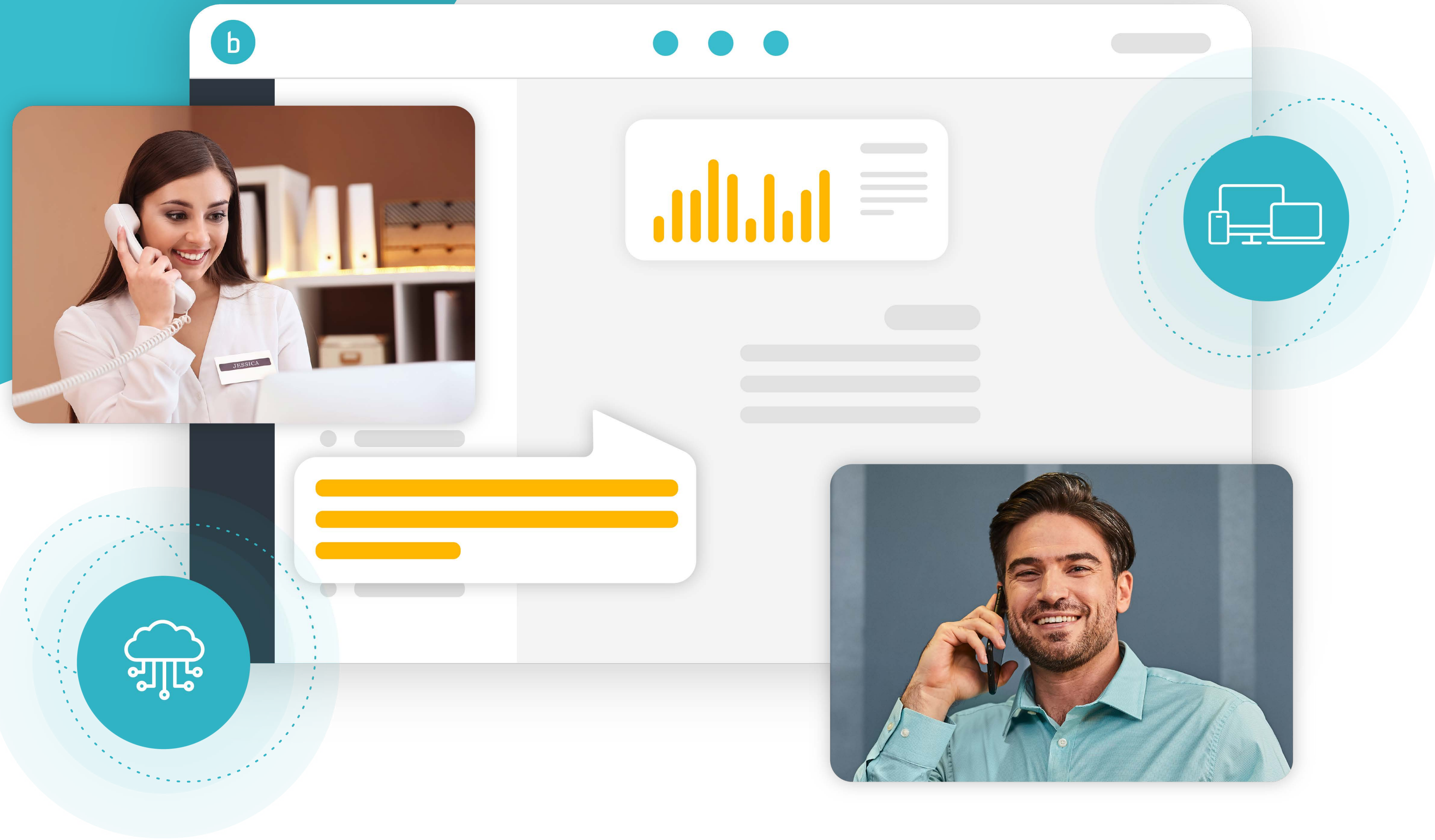


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“By 2025, it’s predicted that **36.2 million Americans will be working remotely.**”

– Upwork’s “Future Workforce Pulse Report”



# Introduction

Collaboration technology has advanced from the glitchy and expensive teleconferencing systems of the past to meet changing cultural needs. Most technology has transitioned to the cloud, allowing for better user experiences, data portability, and accessibility so users have collaboration technology in their pockets, at home, and in the office.

Thanks to technological advancements, even the smallest businesses have access to opportunities in their communities and abroad. To take advantage of these opportunities, businesses need to be digital and agile — this is where cloud collaboration tools come in.

Modern communication and collaboration tools range from internet-based calling to video conferencing and group chats. Most unified communications providers offer all of the above — and more — as a cloud based extension of the traditional desk phone.



# DIGITAL COLLABORATION 101

Before we get into how cloud capabilities can help businesses, we need to understand what the cloud is. The cloud is a virtual server that hosts applications and is accessible via the internet. Most cloud services are accessed using a web browser like Google, Chrome, and Safari, but some companies have dedicated mobile and desktop apps.

Cloud based collaboration tools bring people together — whether they're in the same room or across the globe — and this improved connectivity greatly benefits small and mid-market businesses by giving them access to new opportunities and new ways of capitalizing opportunities.

Let's take a look at how cloud collaboration tools can help businesses succeed.



Broadvoice b-hive Communicator is a digital collaboration app that combines VoIP calling, text messaging, video conferencing, and chat in a single interface.



# How Cloud Collaboration Tools Help Businesses

## Save Time

Cloud collaboration technology can save businesses time. With a collaboration tool like **b-hive Communicator**, employees can quickly chat or call their co-workers for answers to questions, and customers get help in a more timely and efficient way.

When employees are able to work more efficiently, they can help more customers and provide them with better service and a richer experience, which increases revenue. When employees can call, video conference, chat, and even text from the same app, barriers begin to break down, and teams find new ways to grow the business.

## Improve Organization

With a collaboration tool like **b-hive Communicator**, employees can easily locate saved audio and video calls, text messages, and chat histories.

Thanks to organized and centralized communications, employees can collaborate effortlessly and get more work done in the same time while providing customers with a quality experience.

## Share Files

Using a cloud collaboration tool allows employees to quickly upload and send large files, saving time and getting results faster.

## Participate Anytime, Anywhere

Since cloud applications are accessible via the internet, they can be accessed from a user's phone, laptop, computer, or tablet whenever they are needed, which is a valuable asset for hybrid and remote teams.

Cloud collaboration technology makes it easy to share photos and videos, collaborate on projects, connect with people outside the company, and expand the ways in which work gets done. This gives employees more flexibility because they can participate and work from anywhere.



# Best Practices for Digital Collaboration

## Define Goals and Expectations

It's important to clearly define goals and expectations when using a digital collaboration tool. For example, if there is an expectation that setting your status to "Do Not Disturb" truly means you expect not to be disturbed unless there's an emergency, then employees should respect those boundaries.

Here are some goals and expectations to consider when implementing a digital collaboration tool: how quickly to respond to instant messages, setting statuses so co-workers know if and when someone is available, and when someone should notify the entire team in a message versus just the person needed.

## Avoid Getting Overwhelmed

Growing to-do lists can be daunting, so focusing on one task at a time helps avoid being overwhelmed.

Focusing on a single task allows employees to give it their all rather than being distracted by a to-do list of tasks. Giving a project undivided attention helps employees be more productive and create a higher quality product.

## Limit Meetings

There's a reason those coffee mugs with the phrase, "This meeting could have been an email," are so popular.

Sometimes meetings are crucial for brainstorming a new project, giving a progress update, or having weekly team meetings. Other times, the message could easily be communicated through a quick text, chat, or email.

Limiting meetings and using chat allows employees to concentrate and be more productive.

## Be Selective with Tools

Talk with employees to find out what tools work best for them and what tools aren't working. It's better to look for a tool that can accomplish multiple tasks instead of using several tools with one function. Be sure all tools integrate well with each other for a seamless work experience.

The new [b-hive Communicator](#) lets employees chat, text, call, and video conference from one platform — no more unnecessary back-and-forth with other tools. Communicator's intuitive user interface allows employees to complete tasks from a single platform integrated with their business phone numbers.



# HOW COLLABORATION ADDS VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS

Creating a collaborative environment produces results more quickly and effectively and helps employees feel connected to the company's mission and goals. Plus, the culture built internally can extend to customer interactions as well.

Here are five reasons why building a culture of collaboration is important:

- Collaborative work cultures drive results
- Collaborating brings new perspectives
- Collaboration boosts morale
- Collaboration helps teams connect
- Collaboration focuses on the bigger picture





# Collaborative Work Cultures Drive Results

Research shows that top employers were five times more likely to reward collaboration, and companies with collaborative cultures focused on rewarding teams rather than individuals were more likely to perform at high levels.

The study, which looked at more than 1,100 companies, found that purposefully pursuing collaboration is the primary reason high-performance companies like Patagonia succeed.

## Collaborating Brings New Perspectives

Bouncing ideas off co-workers helps bring fresh perspectives to the table when it's needed the most. Each person brings different perspectives, ideas, life experiences, and knowledge to the group, and collaborating allows employees to learn from each other and share their skills.







## Collaboration Boosts Morale

When teams successfully collaborate, they share ideas without fear of being judged or admonished. These collaboration sessions make employees feel like their ideas are heard and valued by co-workers.

Collaboration also fosters meaningful relationships between employees: the more time they spend brainstorming and collaborating, the more they learn about each other, their communication styles, and how to work together effectively.

## Collaboration Helps Teams Connect

As more companies transition to fully remote and hybrid work models, it's important that teams feel connected. Text-only communication can dehumanize employees and lead to miscommunication, productivity issues, and frustration. But when employees have multiple ways to communicate, such as through text, video, or phone, they feel more connected to each other and the company.



# Collaboration Focuses on the Bigger Picture

Without collaboration, employees can feel disconnected from the rest of the company and focus on individual problems or setbacks.

When employees actively and effectively collaborate with team members or co-workers from different departments, they focus more on big-picture goals rather than minutia.





# FINDING THE RIGHT FIT: HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR YOUR TEAM

When choosing a collaboration tool, it's important to consider the team's needs and what features will help employees be most productive. Digital collaboration tools can make or break a team's ability to collaborate, so make sure to assess and determine what they need from a digital collaboration tool.

Each industry has regulatory challenges, so ensure digital collaboration tools meet those needs. For example, if you own a medical office and a general practitioner regularly needs to share patient information with specialists in other departments, find a digital collaboration tool that is HIPAA-compliant, like the [b-hive Communicator](#) app.

Here are five questions to consider when choosing a digital collaboration tool:

## Is It an All-in-One Platform?

Switching back and forth between applications increases the cognitive load on employees, which can hinder productivity.

Look for a tool that can handle a variety of interactions — calling, texting, chatting, and video conferencing — on a single interface. All-in-one platforms will help teams stay organized and be more efficient because they can complete their tasks in one place.

If you're in the market for an all-in-one platform, check out [b-hive Communicator](#) from Broadvoice. The streamlined platform allows teams to easily communicate and collaborate with co-workers no matter where they are or what the day brings.

## Does It Have an Intuitive Interface?

A clunky, unintuitive platform will slow down teams and discourage them from communicating and collaborating. If a collaboration tool doesn't complement teams and how they work, it's not a good fit.

A challenging, hard-to-use tool will only add stress, so make sure to test-drive it before deciding.

Look for a user-friendly and intuitive tool; if possible, have the team demo the tool before purchasing it to see if it can adapt to their workflows.



Schedule a demo to see if Broadvoice is the right fit for your team.

### Can You Collaborate in Real-Time?

Good communication is paramount, and the ability to collaborate in real-time helps teams stay organized. Finding a tool that allows teams to collaborate one-on-one and in larger groups will streamline communications.

Plus, when a tool works on different devices — desktops, laptops, phones, and tablets — employees can communicate and collaborate from anywhere, at any time.

### Does It Have Video Conferencing Abilities?

Finding a tool with good video capabilities is important for remote work because it's an easy way to collaborate in real-time.

Consider important features, like whether the tool allows users to chat during a video call and whether video meetings can be scheduled in advance. Consider whether the platform can handle stable and secure video conferencing for large and small groups.

### Can It Integrate Seamlessly into Current Workflows?

Choosing a tool that doesn't integrate well with current workflows can create new problems while trying to solve existing ones.

Select a tool that integrates with the platforms already being used. This will not only help simplify workflows, it will also make the transition to a new tool easier.





# B-HIVE COMMUNICATOR BASICS: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

b-hive Communicator is the app version of the b-hive unified communications and collaboration platform. Communicator is the place where internal teams and customers collaborate using video, text, chat, call, fax, and voicemail.

Communicator gives business owners and employees flexibility to create more meaningful interactions with co-workers and customers.

“Whether it’s remote users or different office hours, the **b-hive platform** gives us the features and flexibility to meet the needs of each location,” said Brett Porter, President and COO of Summit Management Services, Inc.

The Communicator app brings value to businesses by providing:

- **Enhanced customer experiences**
- **Seamless internal collaboration**
- **Meaningful interactions**





# Enhanced Customer Experiences

Communicator is an all-in-one app with video, text, calling, and chat capabilities that allow employees to use multiple communication methods simultaneously or switch seamlessly between them. That means they can text a customer a link in the middle of a video call, switch from a chat to a phone call, and provide better customer experiences.

# Seamless Internal Collaboration

Not only does Communicator benefit customers, but it benefits teams too.

Keep the creative momentum going with a group video call. Are you collaborating with a co-worker on a document stored in the cloud but want to bounce an idea off them? Give them a quick audio or video call.

With a digital communications tool that enables employees to seamlessly share ideas, employees will be more productive and build a healthy culture of collaboration.

# Meaningful Interactions

With more efficient communications comes easier access to co-workers and more meaningful connections. Employees will have more freedom and flexibility in how they want to communicate.

The plethora of options offered by Communicator keeps the human element in communications and lends itself to meaningful connections and collaboration between team members. The ability to chat, call, and video conference adds new dimensions to interpersonal interactions, which builds team culture and keeps the work environment collaborative.

Learn more about b-hive Communicator by visiting our [website](#).

b-hive Communicator Basics: What It Is and How It Works





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