

IBM Connections: Position your teams to thrive in a digital workplace

Empower employees and drive success with a comprehensive suite of collaboration tools and technologies



Highlights

- People are your most important asset and time is their most important resource—your collaboration tools should help them maximize it
 - A majority of company knowledge is in the minds of employees; promote communities and communication that help disseminate that information
 - Today's business thrives on connections, culture and “working out loud,” and your technology must support—not overrule—those trends
 - Promote the sharing of knowledge and influence through social analytics and accurate, trusted channels for corporate information
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Digital disruption is not just a future threat. A lag in digital transformation is costing organizations right now. For example, USD 37 billion is lost every year due to unproductive meetings alone.¹ Lack of execution is a problem in 26 percent of companies because the transition from R&D to business units needs serious work.² And only 24 percent of global employees are highly engaged.³

These signs point directly to shortcomings in one key area that impacts the entire business: enterprise communication and collaboration. Today's teams are multigenerational, culturally diverse and globally distributed. They require reliable methods of coming together in a truly meaningful way to do their best work. As an executive or digital leader in your organization, you're challenged to empower these teams to do more.

Existing employee communication solutions often miss the mark, creating a variety of problems including disconnected information, irrelevant or duplicate content, and time-consuming processes that discourage use—leaving a gap that holds companies back.

Conversely, companies that get communication and collaboration right often see excellent outcomes:

- Revenues and profits grow
- Client loyalty and retention improve
- Innovation takes off
- Transparency and risk management improve
- Employee productivity and engagement rise



Putting the IBM intelligent digital workplace to work for you

IBM can help you achieve these outcomes with its intelligent digital workplace, IBM Connections™. You can apply this dynamic solution to deliver important business benefits to users and to help transform the enterprise as a whole.

The IBM Connections platform provides cognitive collaboration solutions such as communities, wikis, blogs, files and document sharing while seamlessly integrating with email, instant messaging and other existing tools to provide a frictionless experience for your colleagues. The result: more power to perform.

Being able to distill knowledge and wisdom from your company data—and your employees—is another critical success factor. Corporate data-hoarding tendencies make it difficult to find what you’re looking for when it’s in massive archives or spread across multiple departments. Estimates state that 85 percent of stored data is either “dark”—unstructured, unknown and unsearchable—or redundant, obsolete or trivial.⁴ IBM Connections can help you overcome these limitations by finding and distilling the collective wisdom in your company data through intelligent search-in-context capability.

Providing the core capabilities you need to succeed

IBM Connections⁵ offers a powerful array of core capabilities. It helps you securely share and manage files; improve communications; capture and share knowledge; improve task and issue management; work externally; foster social learning; drive innovation; and improve quality (Figure 1).

These core capabilities deliver value both at corporate and individual levels. The more capabilities you deploy and use, the sooner you can transform your business.

The main interfaces and structure are provided by IBM Connections, and further enhanced by IBM Connections Engagement Center, IBM Docs, IBM Watson® Workspace and other tools depending on the specific needs of your organization. IBM Connections is an extremely extensible platform that helps make it easy to integrate with numerous third-party solutions (including Microsoft Office) through the IBM Connections App Catalog. You can give employees all the content and tools they need in one place, within context, to get their jobs done better and faster.

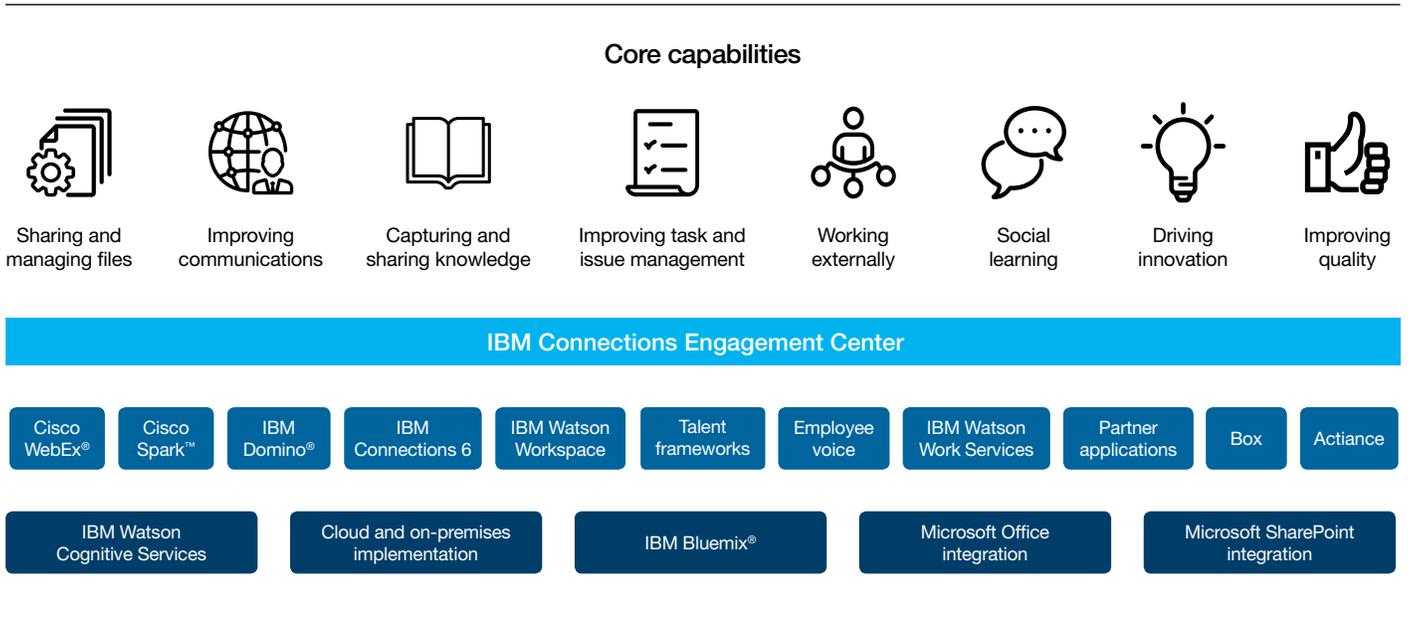


Figure 1. The IBM intelligent digital workplace supports core communications capabilities by combining the strength of multiple IBM solutions.

IBM Connections core capabilities: A closer look



Sharing and managing files

Data accessibility is the key to collaborative transformation. Leverage intelligent digital workplace capabilities designed to streamline sharing and management of data files (Figure 2). Features include full drag-and-drop file management with Microsoft File Explorer and simultaneous multi-person, multi-device editing of Microsoft Office-compatible documents. Easily sync with Mac OS X, Android and iOS.



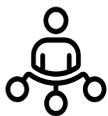
Improving communications

Communities and blogs offer a simple way to communicate news and encourage feedback. Use them together with permission and access functionality to improve company-wide interaction by posting articles and information, and then asking users to share the messages. Social features such as comments, view counts and “likes” make it easy to gauge employees’ sentiments. With IBM collaboration tools, users can follow multiple content sources and status updates with a home page and email feeds personalized to each individual.



Capturing and sharing knowledge

Comprehensive collaboration tools such as IBM Connections and IBM Watson Workspace enable real-time knowledge capture and let individuals respond to requests for information. Forums and comments act as great ways to collect knowledge by asking questions. Question-and-answer pairs are fully searchable, and answers can be “accepted” to highlight agreed outcomes.



Working externally

Use the intelligent digital workplace to extend collaboration beyond your organization to external communities. Influencer networks and customer portals are ideal for asynchronous communication. Instant messaging solutions (such as IBM Watson Workspace) can also provide synchronous communication with people inside and outside of your organization to aid customer support.



Improving task and issue management

Let employees manage the tasks they need to do—and keep track of what others must do for them—with IBM Connections Activities. An excellent way of tracking shared tasks with rich text, file attachments and more, Activities enables employees to manage entire projects within an IBM Connections community. Take full advantage of this capability with integrated email (IBM Verse®), instant messaging and other tools familiar to your organization.



Social learning

IBM Connections has built-in social learning tools to help connect the trainee with the trainer to enhance the learning experience. Deliver tutorials, Q&A experiences and quizzes using IBM Connections Communities Survey and Forum tools.



Driving innovation

Innovation should be an ongoing process, rather than a point-in-time activity. With IBM Connections, ideas are simple to create, share and develop. Users can vote for the ideas they like, and ideas can “graduate” from the ideation blog into an activity and become a project.



Improving quality

Move documentation from files to wiki pages to ease reuse, revision and publishing. Use Activities to define processes and then save them as templates for quick recycling and standardization. Users can subscribe to individual areas relevant to their work, helping ensure that they are always aware of the latest information.

Delivering value across business units

The comprehensive approach of IBM Connections allows you to select tools and strategies based on specific departments’ needs. Rather than force employees to use a one-size-fits-all communication solution, you can give them tools that match well with how they do their specific type of work—and still support collaboration across the enterprise.



	Sharing and managing files	Improving communications	Capturing and sharing knowledge	Improving task and issue management	Working externally	Social learning	Driving innovation	Improving quality
Finance		✓	✓	✓				
Operations		✓		✓			✓	
Customer service		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Marketing			✓			✓	✓	
Sales	✓		✓			✓		
Information technology	✓	✓		✓				
Human resources			✓			✓		
Product development		✓	✓				✓	✓

Finance

Enhance procedures, auditability, traceability and decision-making

Spend less time searching and respond to requests more efficiently. IBM Connections has an integrated dashboard that helps make the decision process simpler and more traceable. Document and knowledge management capabilities help improve and maintain the accuracy and precision of documentation.

Key capabilities needed



Operations

Streamline and boost operations and safety

Increase productivity through shorter response times and fewer hours missed. Foster idea-sharing and dialog between experts and practitioners for better innovation in procedures and safety. Cut the number of accidents by developing highly engaged participants.

Key capabilities needed



Customer service

Acquire and retain more customers without increasing staff and support costs

Improve your company’s value-added differentiation by offering superior service. Reduce friction in communicating with customers and make it easier for customers to receive help through multiple channels. Use collaboration tools to target customer retention through “soft” after-sales support.

Key capabilities needed



Marketing

Coordinate, integrate and deliver more flexible and responsive marketing messages and campaigns

Use detailed customer profiles, combined with listening and analytics technologies, to uncover insights about behaviors that span multiple channels and sources. Then, feed those insights into internal workforce collaboration systems and processes that enable employees to use intelligent tools to enrich responses to customers.

Key capabilities needed



Sales

Increase productivity and boost sales and profits

Enhance market and customer intelligence to sharpen sales activities. Improve reuse of key sales assets to increase efficiency and reduce costs, as well as deliver a consistent and reliable message. Enable sharing of the sales experience through better knowledge management and documentation.

Key capabilities needed



Information technology

Implement greater self-service, communicate efficiently and engage users more easily

Presenting the IT department’s services through an engagement platform can improve productivity. Offering more self-service options helps lessen the burden on IT service staff and gets employees back to work quickly. With consistent content distribution, you can reduce duplication of information and provide a trusted information source and dependable access to solutions for end users.

Key capabilities needed



Human resources

Cut recruitment and on-boarding times

Retain key staff and help augment productivity through better employee engagement. Engaged employees are absent less often, make fewer mistakes and have lower turnover rates.⁶

Key capabilities needed



Product development

Further innovation, create new products and develop new uses for existing products

Enable employees to view new ideas, share their own ideas, and discuss and vote to promote their favorites. Establish a departmental or company-wide innovation initiative with ideation blogs, wikis, forums, feeds and events.

Key capabilities needed





79 percent of executives surveyed named “employee experience” as very important or important, but only 22 percent reported that their companies were excellent at building a differentiated employee experience.⁷

Cognitive collaboration for management

The IBM approach to a collaboration framework empowers managers in multiple ways. You can:

- Use activities to generate a template for your meetings and share the agenda, action points and minutes
- Create a restricted-access community for your leadership team to plan events, discuss issues and coordinate activities
- Produce wikis, forums and blogs to capture and share experience and knowledge from the leadership team
- Use a restricted community with external guests to communicate privately with those involved in the merger or acquisition
- Create planning activities that you can standardize for each period to ensure the quality of your planning and reports

Grow your business by engaging employees and customers

If you're looking to grow your organization in a highly competitive and disruptive environment, you need avenues for engaging and retaining today's digital-savvy customers as well as the 21st-century workforce.

The IBM Connections intelligent digital workplace enables your organization to rise to the challenge. You can deliver flexibility and future-readiness to keep up with rapid change, save time and effort with easy-to-use tools, extend your platform to integrate familiar tools that are relevant to your lines of business, and reduce costs through streamlined implementation.

For more information

Learn more about IBM Connections and the IBM approach to cognitive collaboration at ibm.com/connections

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¹Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 86, 457-476

²Harvard Business Review Analytics Study 2016 and IBM

³“2017 Trends in Global Employee Engagement,” Aon Hewitt, 2017 www.modernsurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017

⁴“Global Databerg Report,” Veritas, March 2016, www.veritas.com/product/information-governance/global-databerg

⁵The IBM Connections Engagement Suite is a bundled offering that includes IBM Connections, IBM Connections Engagement Center and IBM Docs.

⁶Harter, Jim, Gallup, “Moneyball for Business: Employee Engagement Meta-Analysis,” May 31, 2016, www.gallup.com/businessjournal/191501/moneyball-business-employee-engagement-meta-analysis.aspx

⁷Bersin, Josh; Flynn, Jason; Mazor, Art; Melian, Veronica. “The employee experience: Culture, engagement, and beyond: Deloitte 2017 Global Human Capital Trends,” Deloitte University Press, Feb. 28, 2017, dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/focus/human-capital-trends/2017/improving-the-employee-experience-culture-engagement.html



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