

Meeting Room Open

How virtual collaboration tools are meeting the needs of modern business.

[Understanding Sound Experiences, 2021 report](#)



As the world of hybrid work continues to take shape and an increasing number of meetings and creative collaborations take place virtually, integrated audio and video solutions are essential for today's professional.

Research by Ipsos and EPOS has revealed that we now spend over 7 hours a week in virtual meetings on average – that's an increase of two hours per week in the last year. But many professionals are now looking for a more balanced approach, with more face-to-face interactions as well as virtual ones. Being able to read facial expressions and body language improves our ability to gauge people's reactions to our ideas and allows conversations to flow in a smooth, fluid manner – and this is especially important in group discussions.

With more businesses looking to take advantage of the time and cost benefits of meeting virtually rather than in-person, it's essential that the quality of those meetings isn't compromised. This means using technology that people on both sides of the conversation have confidence in, without the distractions of bad audio or poor visual connections. With the right technology, users can focus their full attention on the content of the conversation and on responding to those involved.

As we evolve to a hybrid model that combines formal working environments with remote working, we need to ensure that new boundaries are not created. Virtual collaboration tools need to work both in and out of the office – and ideally create the link between the two.



Less time spent, lower costs and more freedom. But there are downsides to virtual meetings.

In the last year, most professionals have spent more time in virtual meetings than ever before. Even those who felt that face-to-face meetings were essential to business had to adapt as travel restrictions and local lockdowns meant that meeting in-person has not been possible. For many business leaders, it's been an exciting opportunity to test a new way of working. Almost all decision makers see the benefits of virtual meetings. The time and costs saved by not having to travel, the freedom to host the meeting from anywhere and the opportunity to include colleagues and customers from any global location or those who can't access the usual workplace are obvious business wins.

But now business leaders have experienced this new way of collaborating, do they see face-to-face meetings a thing of the past? No, not quite.

As we move beyond the restrictions of the pandemic and into a more hybrid approach to work, employees are expecting the emphasis on virtual meetings to lessen, with more in-person interactions taking over again.



88%

of decision makers say that bad audio has caused their company issues in the last 12 months

– but 77% of those decision makers also think the right technology can alleviate those problems.

Technology issues

31% of all decision makers
28% of all end users

Online meeting tools not fit for the purpose of all meetings

22% of all decision makers
16% of all end users

Difficulties seeing details shared on screen

20% of all decision makers
13% of all end users

This shouldn't surprise us. While decision makers (those responsible for operational and purchasing decisions) see great benefits, for many end users (those using office equipment day-to-day), bad audio or visual tech experiences have made virtual meetings painful. Our research showed that 89% of all end users currently experience challenges when having virtual meetings or workshops. Happily, decision makers also recognize the issues bad audio can cause – and what the right solution is.

Solving technology pain points like bad audio connections could go long a way to persuading employees that virtual meetings can be just as good as the real thing. But it might not be enough. The 'human connection' people get from face-to-face meetings is powerful and for this to be replicated in the virtual world, technology needs to be smarter and offer a more natural experience.



68%

believe good audio will stop the need to repeat or clarify points while working



56%

believe good audio will prevent moments of stress at work



67%

believe good audio will prevent feelings of frustration, annoyance and irritation at work



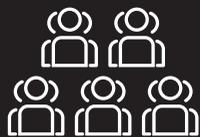
66%

believe good audio will prevent extra time required setting technology up at work

Expectations about how much **more** people will work in a formal workplace versus remote location as compared to before the pandemic



Decision makers



Employees

US	74%	29%
UK	52%	18%
Germany	40%	24%
France	43%	22%
HK/SING	54%	38%

Bridging the gap between decision makers and employees' expectations of hybrid working

These results show that, at a global level, decision makers need to engage with employees to better understand their expectations about hybrid working and what employees need to support them to reach their full potential at work.

When considering how flexible work locations can be, and how best to implement the hybrid model for business, technology has a clear role in bridging the gap between decision makers and employees.

Knowing that the quality of meetings can be as high in a virtual setting – and that genuine collaboration is possible wherever teams are based – could help build employers confidence in their teams continuing to work from remote locations. While employees who want to keep their travel to a minimum, and who have embraced the virtual way, might be reassured by the opportunity in-office collaboration tools offer.

60%

of decision makers believe better sound will help them retain clients

71%

of workers believe that better audio will help prevent lost pitches in the future

Virtual versus physical – progressive businesses will embrace the best of both worlds.

Hybrid working is certainly set to dominate in the future, but the role of in-person meetings should not be overlooked. In a recent Work Trend Index survey, 67% of employees said they wanted more in-person work collaboration post pandemic, meaning that the importance of small huddle rooms in otherwise open plan offices will be key to accommodating new norms of hybrid working.

When the world returns to a “new normal”, end users predict there will be a 25% increase in time spent in face-to-face meetings and 13% decrease in virtual workshops and collaboration meetings.

For many of those returning to the workplace for all or part of their time, getting together

in physical meetings rooms will be a welcome return. However, we are now used to the benefits of virtual interactions. We expect to have seamless, collaborative meetings with colleagues from around the world, not just in our local office. So where meetings with small physical groups will return, calling in remote working colleagues will also be standard practice, making virtual collaborations a key component of hybrid working from now on.

If businesses can use the right technology to support them, there’s an opportunity to take the best of both worlds – physical teams interacting on site – and collaborating via video conferencing tools with those in other locations to create truly borderless teams.

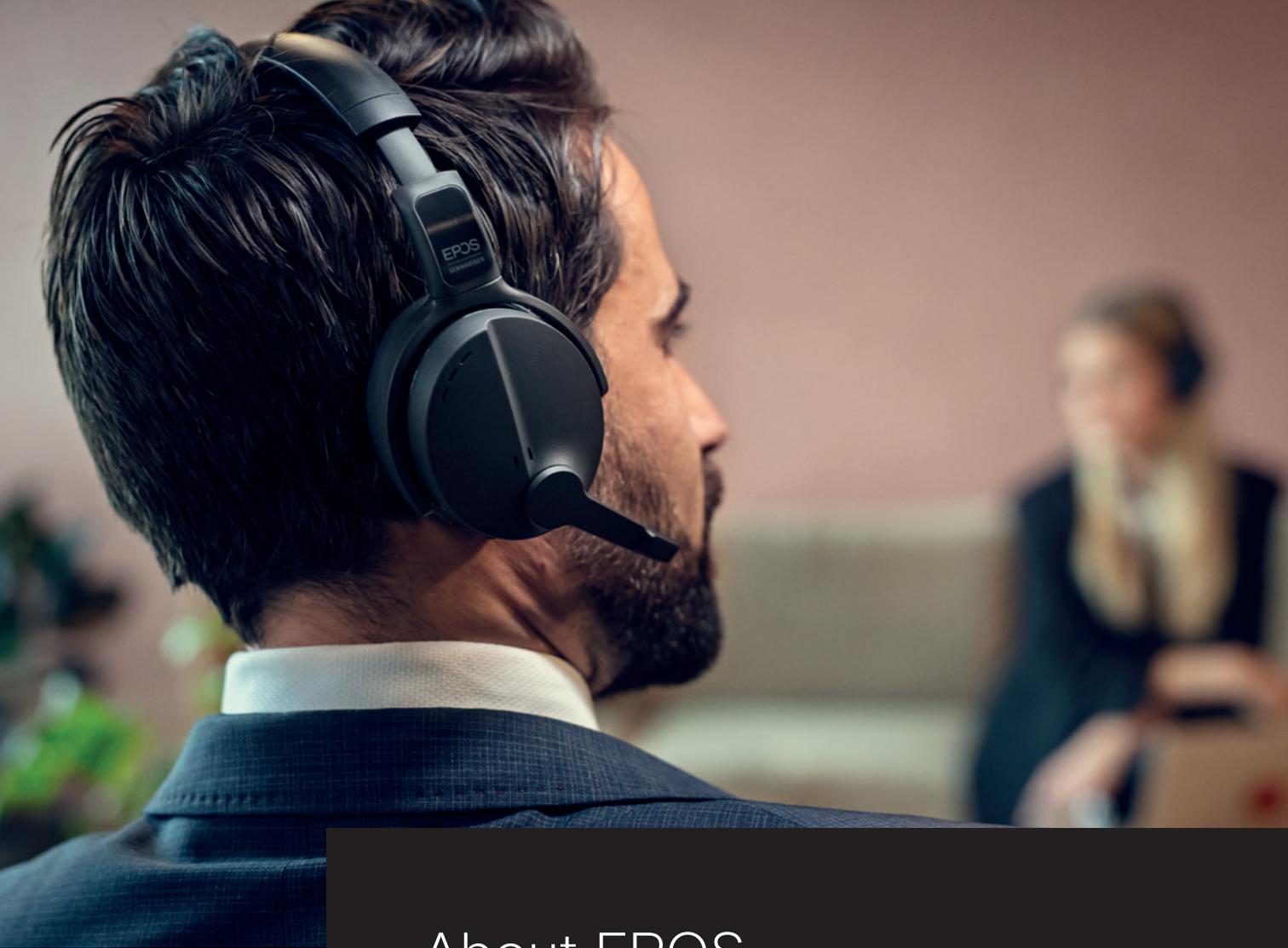
Stay professional as always

Collaboration technology is at the heart of the hybrid working revolution. By acknowledging the powerful role of audio and visual technology, we can eradicate distractions and focus on communicating content and enhancing human interaction in our meetings – and make that the professional standard we all aspire to.

Find out more about the range of audio and video solutions for every kind of meeting.

Visit eposaudio.com/enterprise





About EPOS

EPOS delivers high-end audio and video solutions for business professionals and the gaming community.

The establishment of EPOS follows the demerge of Sennheiser Communications – the joint venture between Sennheiser electronic GmbH & CO.KG and Demant A/S. Alongside the introduction of an own-branded portfolio, EPOS continues to sell the Sennheiser Communications portfolio co-branded as EPOS | SENNHEISER.

Headquartered in Copenhagen, EPOS is part of Demant – a world-leading audio and hearing technology group.

About the research

This research was conducted by IPSOS Denmark on behalf of EPOS. The data was collected using Online Computer Assisted Web Interviews (CAWI) between mid March to beginning of April 2021.

The main target sample consisted of respondents:

- From the US, UK, France, Germany, Hong Kong and Singapore
- Males / females 18–65 y
- Working in companies with 50+ employees*
- Decision makers and end-users of audio solutions
- Working a minimum 20 hours per week

Target Definitions

Throughout the report, the respondents are categorized and referred to as follows:

Decision Maker (DM) Call Centric

Decision makers responsible or sharing responsibility for purchasing headsets for: employees who spend most of their time at their desk receiving and/or making calls with customers, suppliers and colleagues.

Decision Maker (DM) Office/Mobile

Decision makers responsible or sharing responsibility for purchasing audio solutions for: employees who do much of their work at their desk, but also have meetings and other activities OR are highly mobile within the office/workplace or outside.

End User (EU) Call Centric

Spend most of their work receiving and/or making calls with customers, suppliers or colleagues. 64% are using headset / headphones at work that were bought separately. 36% are using both corded headphones from a smartphone at work and a headset that was bought separately.

End User (EU) Office/Mobile

Do much of their work at their desk, but also have meetings and other activities OR are highly mobile within the office/workplace or outside. 73% are using headset / headphones at work that were bought separately. 27% are using both corded headphones from a smartphone at work and a headset that was bought separately.

Potential End User (EU) Office/Mobile/Call Centric

100% do not use separately bought headset / headphones at work. 11% are using headphones that came with a smartphone at work.

*Due to a very low incident rate for end-users call centric in all countries, the criteria for company size was relaxed and companies with 10–49 employees accepted. 63 respondents (2,5%) out of the total sample.

EPOS

THE POWER OF AUDIO

EPOS Group A/S
Industriparken 27
2750 Ballerup, Denmark
eposaudio.com