

How to embrace virtual collaboration for increased productivity

By [Damian Michael](#)

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Every year thousands of people are being employed in South Africa with job titles that did not exist in the previous year.



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As the world progresses, so does the job force and, according to an article from the current World Economic forum, “35% of the skills that are crucial in today’s workforce will have changed by the year 2020.”

It’s called the Fourth Industrial Revolution and is characterised by an exponential increase in various digital and cyber technologies.

Due to the rise of smart machines, systems, our computational world and superstructure organisations, your current job may cease to exist in a few years and new jobs will grow in its place.

Virtual collaboration

A recent survey by Frost & Sullivan showed that companies investing in collaboration technologies increased productivity by as much as 400%. In another survey of business leaders at the Global Leadership Summit in London, it was found that 34% of executives will have more than half their company’s full-time employees [working remotely](#) in 2020. And that trend is only going to increase.

Working remotely is fast becoming the way of the world. And as a business owner or employee, you will be expected to work from home or while on the road at some point or another. [Cloud based products](#) like Microsoft Azure, Gmail or Dropbox are some of the tools that can make document storage and access as easy as connecting your WiFi.

When you eliminate the time-consuming and often insecure process of sending files back and forth over email, you create a more streamlined process. A more efficient collaboration system that enables employees to access files from one central location ultimately leads to an improved business bottom line.

The only way to solve this problem is by using pioneering technology to communicate and collaborate. Virtual collaboration is here to stay, which means you need to be able to continue to engage and encourage productivity with a virtual team in the same way you would if everyone was in the same building.

Virtual collaboration is all about the tools you use. Here are some of the best online collaboration tools you should familiarise yourself with:

Microsoft Azure

A private cloud basically delivers infrastructure as a service. Microsoft's Office365 is software as a service, where the customers can have access to the office suite, sharepoint, exchange, and lync. Microsoft Azure is platform as a service, a platform where developers can run their applications and where companies can collaborate remotely.

Google Docs

Edit and contribute to your team's online spreadsheets, presentations and documents from anywhere in the world, in real time.

Skype

Stay connected through voice calls over the internet, as well as instant messaging, video conferencing and file transfers.

Time Doctor

Keep track of your coworker halfway across the world, with this time tracking program that lets you know exactly what everyone is working on and how long they're spending on these activities.

Basecamp

Ensure the whole team knows where everything is, what's next on the task list, and prevent anything from slipping through the cracks with this popular collaborative project management tool.

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