There's a race underway: Businesses are pursuing digital transformation to stay competitive and reap the rewards of the digital age. As you might imagine, they have plenty of hurdles to leap over on the way. Simultaneously managing multiple initiatives, activities, and vendors while keeping day-to-day operations running smoothly is enough to make your head spin.

If you're wondering how to improve external communication, consider cloud-based tools such as video conferencing.

This is especially tricky to pull off when the various players involved need to be in sync with one another, yet don't technically work together. To succeed, businesses need to figure out how to improve external communication so they can more effectively coordinate their strategies.

Here's why communication with business partners is essential and how business communication tools can help:

How to Improve External Communication: Keep It Frequent and Open
No news is not good news when you’re managing any type of project, let alone a high-level, company-wide initiative such as digital transformation. On the contrary, you need to consistently solicit and share news updates with all your partners on how things are proceeding to make sure the road ahead is free and clear.

As any IT professional knows, even with the most diligent planning, you’re still going to run into roadblocks, such as communication gaps, technology incompatibility among platforms, or other obstacles in your company’s technology ecosystem. You can head these problems off at the pass by fostering consistent, open dialogue among your partners. That way, you’ll make sure there are no misunderstandings and confirm that everybody is on the same page about where they’re headed and how they’ll get there.

Robust communication also builds trust, which is especially important when building partnerships among various parties that have never worked together before and have weak ties at best. Trust also gives you essential capital you will need to cash in when problems arise.

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How Business Communication Tools Can Help

Okay, so the idea of facing down stubborn technology obstacles while keeping all your various partners in sync and committed to progress may sound pretty daunting. However, there is a silver lining. Business communication tools can come in handy when corralling the various parties and getting them on the same page. Because your strategic partners may not have existing working relationships with one another, they’re probably going to rely on you to coordinate communications and serve as the central point person for keeping things moving. Cloud-based communication tools can help you get that done.

For example, if your company is working on a strategy for creating digitally enabled products and services, you will likely need to bring together different parties at various stages in order to confirm the requirements of these products and services, envision their designs, and then build them. You can host regular meetings with key partners via group video conferencing, which is helpful for demonstrating physical products and reading body language. If you need to collaborate on some data analysis or resolve a miscommunication involving a technical issue, an online meeting in which everyone has access to the same information via a shared screen would be valuable.

Voice calls are also a solid option, of course, particularly in the case of brief check-ins when there are no complex agenda items to cover. Likewise, instant messaging can be a helpful, informal way to keep the day-to-day lines of communication flowing and get rapid-fire answers to quick questions. However, perhaps most importantly in an era when everyone is mobile and working from various locations, it can be especially clutch to have a mobile app available for bringing everyone together in a meeting. That way, whether they’re in the office or at the airport, they can still participate using mobile devices.

Other Strategic Benefits of Business Communication Tools

Although business communication tools shine when bringing strategic partners together, the same advantages apply when collaborating with internal stakeholders — particularly those who work remotely. As the point person, you have to be on guard for any issues that could
affect the success of your digital transformation initiative, so opening lines of communication with your colleagues will also be vital. Simply having a cloud-based communication system can be a strategic asset as well, since it gives your business a platform that facilitates future digital transformation using APIs or business software integrations.

Digital transformation — and the partnerships required to enable it — can be challenging to navigate, but it's easier to manage when you have powerful business communication tools on your side. If you haven't yet considered how cloud-based communication tools can enhance collaboration with strategic partners, it may be worth exploring the benefits of doing so.

*Connect with Vonage Business to learn more about how video conferencing and other cloud communications solutions can aid your company.*