

# Survey Reveals Australian Workers Waste Significant Time Setting Up Meeting Technology



Worrying Sign for Increasingly Remote and Mobile Workforce

ShoreTel® (NASDAQ: SHOR), a leading provider of communication solutions that make interactions simple, today shared the results of a new survey which uncovered challenges with remote meeting technology are impacting the productivity of Australian workers.

ShoreTel's Build a Better Meeting survey canvassed the meeting habits and productivity preferences of nearly 500 respondents in Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore. The survey found that, when setting up meeting technologies such as video or audio conferencing, a significant proportion of Australians find it to be a challenge, with 25% stating that it takes them more than 11 minutes on average to set up a meeting.

"We looked at the Australian workers who spend more than 10 hours a week in meetings, and the productivity impact is even more alarming," said Frédéric Gillant, vice president and managing director, Asia Pacific for ShoreTel. "Of this group, 37% stated that it takes more than 11 minutes on average to get their meeting technologies set up. And this is in spite of the fact that this group is more prepared - with 70% saying that they always plan an agenda – and spends enough time in meetings to have ample experience engaging with meeting software. This dichotomy points to usability issues with the technology."

Bandwidth issues and Internet problems were cited as the biggest challenges to set up meeting technology (40%), followed by old or outdated technology (22%), unclear or missing details on local dial-ins or access points (19%), and human error (18%).

ShoreTel also asked survey respondents how many days per month they work remotely, with the majority (75%) spending at least one day outside the office and 14% working remotely more than 15 days a month.

"A significant proportion of Australians regularly work outside the traditional office space, and that figure is likely to increase over time as the way we work continues to evolve," said Gillant. "That means a greater reliance on meeting technologies is needed to ensure these employees can stay connected and that the time wasted on inefficient technology will become increasingly detrimental to productivity."

While communication technologies are transforming the workplace and the ways in which workers interact with each other, Gillant notes that not every solution is simple to implement or easy for people to use. What's more, trying to use a host of standalone communication tools presents additional problems for IT teams and users.

"A good unified communications (UC) system takes the best features of each technology – IP phones, conferencing, video, digital document sharing, chat and mobility – and combines them in a single solution that enables individuals to collaborate seamlessly wherever they are and using whichever channel is the most convenient and effective," said Gillant. "This makes meetings easier to set up and virtual interactions more natural, which increases productivity and greatly streamlines workflows."

## Remote Workers vs Remote 'Meeters'

The Australian survey results found an interesting distinction in attitudes between people who attend the majority of their meetings from their desks or remotely ('remote meeters'), and those who spend more than eight days a month working remotely ('remote workers'). When asked what they really do in meetings, 73% of remote workers say they fully participate and take notes, while only 53% of remote meeters say they do.

"It's likely that people who are choosing to join a meeting remotely are often doing so deliberately so they can get other things done at the same time," said Gillant. "However, remote workers are more conscious of their need to connect and contribute given that they don't have the option to attend the meeting in person."

Gillant believes that there are some simple steps a meeting organiser can take to ensure greater focus from participants.

"While it's far easier to ensure engagement and attention in face-to-face meetings, there are strategies you can employ for remote participants. First,

make sure that the people you invite are essential to the meeting, and give them an active role to play. Video conferencing tools can help to discourage multi-tasking by making participants feel more visible, as well as increasing their sense of 'presence' in the meeting."

#### Preparation Improves Productivity

The survey also found that the average Australian worker prepares well for meetings, generally finds meetings to be productive, and is diligent in their participation during meetings. The survey found that 66% of Australian workers say they fully participate in discussions or by taking notes, 54% always prepare an agenda prior to meetings and rate the productivity of their meetings overall at 2.98 (where 4=very productive, 1=not productive).

Given this positive attitude about the effectiveness of meetings, Australian workers on average spend more time per week in meetings than their counterparts in Singapore and Hong Kong. Sixteen percent (16%) of Australians surveyed estimate that they spend more than 15 hours a week in meetings, compared to 7% in Hong Kong and only 4% in Singapore.

"While we tend to think of Australian workplace culture as more casual and laid-back, it's pleasing to see that Australian workers are quite diligent when it comes to meetings. The majority of Australians always prepare a meeting agenda, which is important to ensuring a productive discussion," said Gillant.

According to Gillant, laying out an agenda and distributing it ahead of time is one of the simplest ways to boost meeting productivity. Even more effective is to use productivity tools, such as agenda planners, that are built into leading unified communications (UC) solutions.

"Understanding the meeting habits of Australian workers puts a spotlight on opportunities to improve employee productivity as well as the strategic importance of providing easy, modern technologies that enable workers to conduct better, more productive meetings," concluded Gillant.

#### About ShoreTel, Inc.

ShoreTel (NASDAQ: SHOR) provides businesses worldwide with communications solutions that make interactions simple. ShoreTel offers business phone systems, unified communications and contact center solutions that deliver unmatched flexibility and ease for companies looking to increase productivity and drive innovation. ShoreTel offers solutions in the cloud, onsite or a hybrid of both, giving customers the freedom to choose the best fit for their business needs now and in the future. Headquartered in Sunnyvale, Calif., ShoreTel has offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit [shoretel.com](http://shoretel.com).

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#### About the Build a Better Meeting Survey

ShoreTel and Explore Communications surveyed a total of 243 Australian workers for the survey which covered Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore. The survey was conducted online and also via a street survey in the Sydney CBD during March and April 2017. Survey demographics (company size and industries, respondents' generation and gender), comparative country results and other data is available on request.