



PROFESSIONAL AUDIO FOR A WORK-FROM-ANYWHERE FUTURE

How audio devices built for hybrid work increase inclusion, well-being, and productivity

Professionalism goes virtual



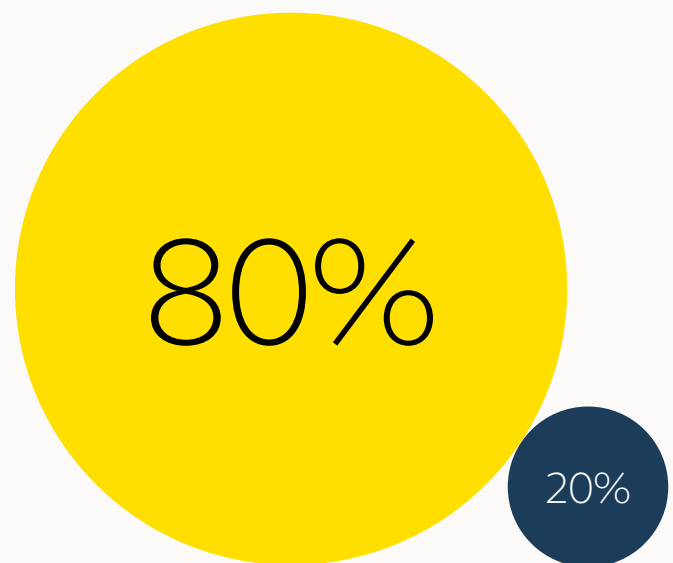
THE WAY WE WORK IS EVOLVING

The way professionals work is rapidly changing: 63% of employees globally now say that hybrid work – where they split their time between the home, office, or any other location – is their ideal way of working. More mobile and more flexible than ever, the vast majority of employees are relying more and more on video meetings to connect to one another and get their work done. In fact, 80% of all meetings worldwide are now either fully virtual or hybrid, with only 20% happening fully in person.¹

REDEFINING PROFESSIONALISM

Since the start of the pandemic, work in many ways has gotten less formal. For many, there's no going back to the days of suits and ties or strict working hours. This isn't to say that professionalism is gone, but rather that it's evolving alongside our ways of working. With formal workspaces no longer our shared foundation, the codes of professionalism have been rewritten in a new set of virtual-first practices.

And with that, the technology we use to access our virtual workspaces is what helps define our professionalism. Our ability to present ourselves and be heard and seen in those spaces impacts how well we can connect, communicate, and work in virtual environments.



8 in 10 meetings are either fully remote or hybrid

¹Jabra Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report

MORE VIDEO MEANS MORE AUDIO

With the shift to remote working during the pandemic, the use of video meeting platforms skyrocketed to an all-time high. From January 2020 to April 2021, Microsoft Teams experienced a 625% growth in daily active users.¹ Similarly, Zoom now hosts more than 3.5 trillion meeting minutes per year globally.² Now, as some people return to the office and meetings rooms while others work flexibly from remote locations, video meeting platforms and devices are evolving to make sure everyone can see and be seen equally no matter where they're working from.

But we don't just meet on these platforms so that we can see one another. We also need to be able to hear and be heard clearly. This is essential to feeling a sense of togetherness and belonging, as well as being able to share ideas and get things done. Poor audio and stressful virtual experiences can also negatively impact productivity and mental well-being at work. To operate easily and professionally in these virtual environments, leaders and IT decision makers must also consider the audio experience of their employees.

AUDIO DEVICES MAKE OR BREAK THE HYBRID EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

In 2022, audio technology is more advanced than ever. You can now get a very high-quality sound experience designed for almost any environment. Runners can get True Wireless earbuds with sweat protection and a perfect in-ear fit. Frontline workers can get extra-durable headsets with enhanced microphone noise cancellation. And hybrid workers can benefit from headsets which were designed to help them seamlessly move between work environments without missing a beat, either in their work or in their life.

As we'll see, getting the wrong audio device can make the hybrid experience worse by causing employees to feel more left out, unheard, and distracted. Getting the right device, however, can elevate the professional experience to a whole new level. In this eBook, we'll give you all the information you need to make the right decisions about which audio devices will boost employees' experiences as hybrid working professionals.

¹Microsoft Q2 2020 Earnings Report, Microsoft Q3 2021 Earnings Report

²Zoom Q3 FY21 Earnings Report



If employees are to feel a sense of belonging in professional virtual environments, they need the professional tools and technologies built exactly with those environments in mind.

Holger Reisinger,
SVP, Jabra

The difference between built-in, consumer, and professional audio devices

Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of audio device categories that employees use to collaborate with colleagues in video meetings: built-in, consumer, and professional audio devices. Here's the difference between them.



BUILT-IN AUDIO

Built-in audio devices – the speakers and microphones physically built into your desktop, laptop, or mobile device – are intended to serve our base audio needs. In these, both the incoming and outgoing audio quality is oftentimes far lower than when using a peripheral device.



CONSUMER AUDIO DEVICES

Consumer headsets are engineered to maximize your music and media experience in your daily activities. Their primary focus is on delivering a premium incoming audio experience – that is, the sound you hear when listening to music or taking a call. As such, they oftentimes have high-quality Active Noise Cancellation and the option to adjust EQ settings to craft your ideal sound profile.



PROFESSIONAL AUDIO DEVICES

Professional headsets are purpose-built for hybrid work. They typically boast all the same features as consumer devices as well as enhanced call and collaboration performance. With premium noise cancelling microphones, they're able to cancel noise not only for you but also for those you're speaking with, so you can be heard clearly and be at your most professional. They're also certified to optimize your experience when using video meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

Professional audio devices make for more inclusive and productive meetings

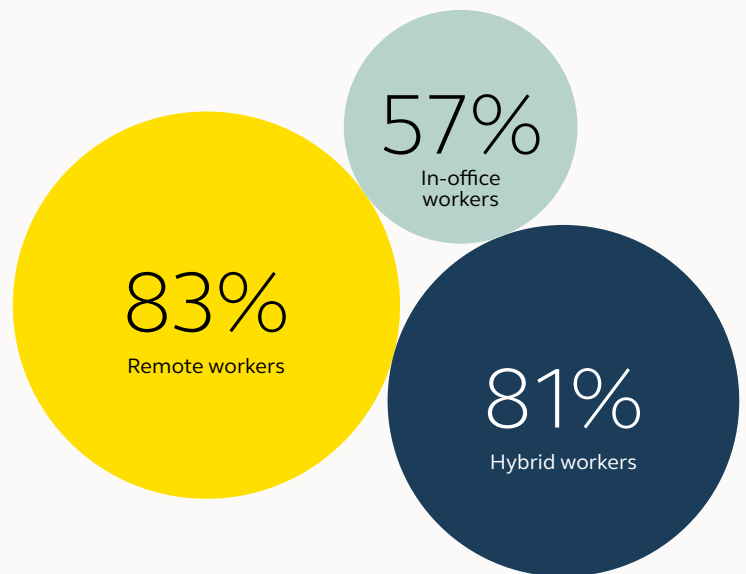


With 8 in 10 meetings globally happening in virtual environments, making sure people feel included and productive is essential to an organization's success. In our recent Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report, we found that employees using professional devices experienced the least amount of issues in virtual meetings when compared to built-in or consumer device users.

MORE INCLUSIVE MEETINGS

Our earlier research has shown that the sense of connection amongst teams decreased by 28% during remote work. Over time, this lack of connection can weaken company culture and lead to employee burnout. Since connection now takes place in virtual environments, we need tools that make everyone feel like they're in the room.

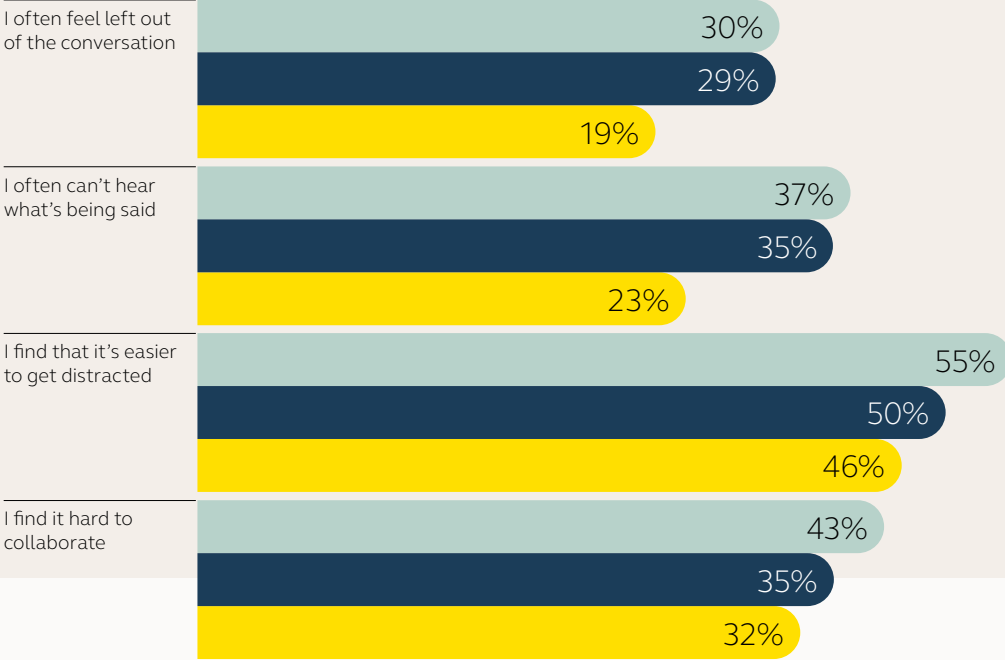
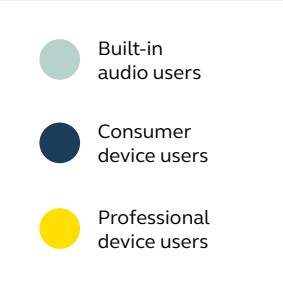
In our study, professional device users were 11% less likely to report feeling left out of the conversation than built-in audio users and 10% less likely than consumer device users. Similarly, they were 14% less likely to report having trouble hearing what's being said than built-in audio users and 12% less likely than consumer users¹. With professional devices, employees are better able to maintain that sense of team connection in hybrid and remote work.



My organization provides me with the necessary technology (i.e., laptop, headset, video camera, video meeting platform, etc.) to collaborate equally and inclusively no matter where I am.

¹Jabra Hybrid Ways of Working 2022 Global Report

“Compared to a face-to-face meeting, when I join a virtual meeting where everyone else is also virtual...”



MORE PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Professional device users also report less distractions and less collaboration issues than built-in audio users. With barking dogs and noisy neighbors, distractions have always been a difficult part of remote and hybrid work. However, with Active Noise Cancellation and noise-cancelling microphones, professional audio devices eliminate unwanted background noise both for you and on your outgoing audio.

Additionally, it's no surprise that employees with professional devices find it easier to collaborate: that's exactly what their devices were engineered to do!

As leaders and IT decisionmakers continue to search for ways to improve the hybrid and virtual meeting experience, professional audio devices should be at the top of their list.



Leaders need to prioritize the employee experience and ensure that they can thrive in virtual meetings regardless of location. It starts with identifying technologies that will enable both in-office and remote employees to collaborate on an equal playing field, so employees can seamlessly move between these places without feeling left out, unheard, or distracted.

Holger Reisinger,
SVP, Jabra



How to tell if a device is “professional”

So, here’s what you need to look for in a professional device. We’ve covered some of the basics above, but let’s take a deeper dive into the specifics.

CERTIFICATIONS

Certifications are the key to identifying a professional device. Certified devices have gone through extensive testing in order to meet the standards of performance and functionality for professional environments. This can be either Open Office certifications for clear audio in noisy environments, or UC certifications for video meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet. Open Office certifications ensure that a device is capable of eliminating a certain degree of background noise from a call so that anyone you’re speaking with can hear you clearly. Similarly, UC certifications enable you to get the absolute best experience from whichever meeting platform you’re using, with the right hardware unlocking new levels of functionality in the meeting software we use every day.

CLEAR AUDIO FOR SPEECH ISOLATION

While you can certainly make calls with consumer headsets, this is one area where professional headsets definitely come out on top. With more microphones (up to 10 in some headsets, such as the Jabra Evolve2 85) and a boom arm, total speech isolation is far easier to achieve than with consumer headsets, which frequently pick up high levels of background noise. And with more

seamless control over the call experience (boom arm answering, multiple mute functions, easily accessible volume control), you can focus on the task at hand and let the technology fade into the background.

ENHANCED SUPPORT AND FEATURE UPDATES

With certifications, you also get added product support and feature updates from both the meeting platform partner and the peripheral or end-point provider. Jabra and Microsoft, for example, offer a rich support function to organizations using their products and services. This elevated after-market support also enables organizations to minimize the number of IT tickets raised, freeing up their IT teams to solve more pressing tech and security issues. And with firmware updates, you know that the feature set of your device will always grow with the latest tech capabilities and will work with your platform, no matter what updates they deliver.



Without a boom arm, you lose up to 20dB of voice pickup. To compensate, this reduced pickup level must be amplified, which in turn also amplifies the level of background noise. This means that when you’re using consumer earbuds in a virtual meeting, anyone you’re speaking to will hear more of what’s going on around you. But with a boom arm-equipped professional headset, you can be sure that you can hear and be heard, even in the noisiest work environments.

Leo Larson, Senior Director,
Audio Research, Jabra

How we engineer our products for professional hybrid work experiences



DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL CALL QUALITY

Professional devices house advanced hardware to deliver clearer sound quality: a boom arm to help isolate your voice and multi-mic arrays to distinguish between your voice and disruptive background noise. And with Jabra products that meet the Premium Microphones for Open Office standard, you can be sure that your headset's microphones will suppress surrounding noise and human voices in your vicinity. All these features together ensure that your call experience is natural and crystal clear.

PROTECTING YOUR HEARING

As a part of the GN group, we have medical, professional, and consumer grade audio research and development under one roof. With GN Hearing in the same group, we have in-house knowledge on how best to protect our users' hearing. And because of this, Jabra professional devices are engineered with numerous features to protect your hearing. Jabra PeakStop™ eliminates potentially harmful decibel spikes, so you never have to worry about surprise sounds, while Jabra SafeTone™ offers enhanced audio protection that ensures a safe listening level and meets the EU and US (Noise At Work) safety requirements.



Jabra has a strong history of producing best-in-class audio solutions. We combine solid geometries and high-quality materials to create a professional, premium look and feel; with softer, more inviting forms, materials and textures, paired with visually simplified tech elements, to create a harmonic, intuitive user experience.

Iain Pottie,
Head of Design, Jabra



KEEPING YOU FOCUSED

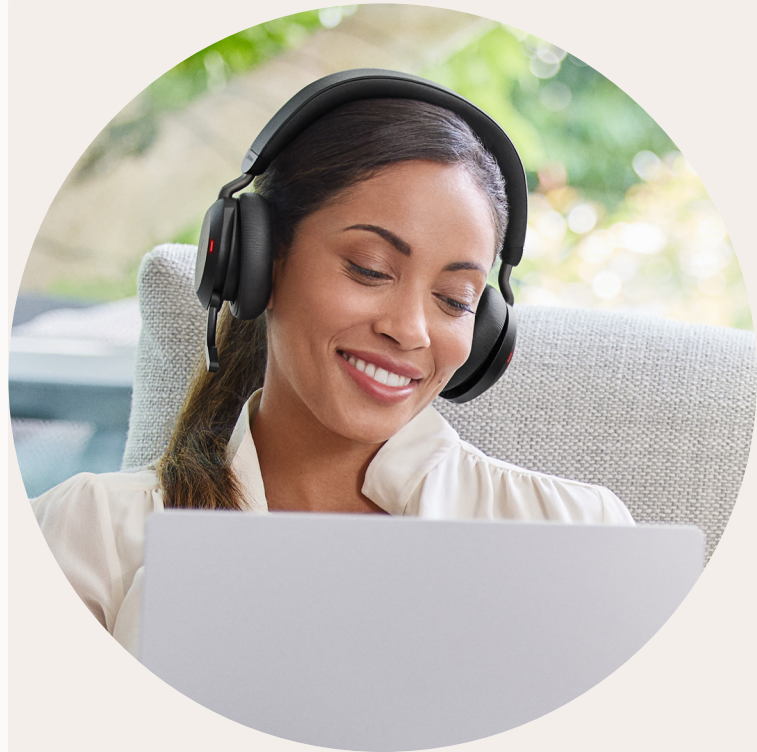
To help keep you focused wherever you are working, many of our professional audio devices are equipped with passive, active, or total noise cancellation technologies to block out unwanted disturbances, allowing you to simply get your work done. Similarly, busylight-enabled headsets signal to colleagues or family members that you're engaged in a task that requires distraction-free focus.

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

Thanks to advancements in Bluetooth technology, many of our professional audio devices have the ability to connect to two devices at once, meaning you can answer calls on both your computer and phone at the touch of a button. That also means that if you're listening to music on your phone to concentrate, you won't miss an incoming call on your laptop. Finally, we optimize the connectivity experience by delivering seamless multi-connectivity across a wide range of device brands and operating systems.

PROVIDING A CERTIFIED EXPERIENCE

At Jabra, we engineer all our firmware from the ground up and work closely with our alliance partners to meet stringent certification measures, ensuring our products work seamlessly with whatever meeting platform a company chooses to meet with.



Communication is our company's heritage. We've always focused on building connections between people that are as close to face-to-face as possible. And because of that, we've always put communication first in everything that we do. Yes, our audio solutions provide a premium music experience with superior fit and comfort, but our core focus has always been on recreating the real-life communication experience, no matter where you're at.

Leo Larson, Senior Director,
Audio Research, Jabra

Find out more

If you have any questions about Jabra products, please contact your Jabra representative or visit [Jabra.com](https://www.jabra.com)

WHO WE ARE

Hej. (That's 'hi' in Danish.) We're Jabra and we've been engineering technology that makes life look and sound better for over 150 years. And you? Well, you might be running a million-dollar account from your kitchen (or café, or school run, or just about anywhere really). Or running your first 5k with a pair of expertly engineered earbuds. Or running a project via video, beaming yourself from a Toronto armchair to a Tokyo boardroom. Whatever you've got going on, we've got you. With advanced, intelligent video technology. And an incredible sound quality that makes your voice and your music sound better than ever. All designed to bring life and work wonderfully in tune.

Jabra. Technology for life's new rhythm.