



REGION FOCUS: WORLDWIDE

BETTER, FASTER, MORE ALIGNED: The Transformative Impact of Mature Collaborative Work Management



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IDC Opinion

IDC surveyed 610 enterprises worldwide and asked questions exploring key concepts related to collaboration and work management, particularly as it emerged in the new hybrid work environment following the events of 2020. This study focused in particular on collaborative work management (CWM), a part of the larger post-pandemic effort to achieve greater organizational effectiveness in the face of continuing economic uncertainty.

Critically, the study showed improvements in all aspects of organizational effectiveness (collaboration, knowledge management, task efficiency, visibility, and workflow) through the adoption of collaborative work management systems. These improvements were measurable at the team level in the initial maturity stages but expanded in both breadth (number of impacted teams) and depth (number of significantly improved metrics) as organizations matured. This suggests that CWM is a catalyst for organizational effectiveness, the effort to do more with less by promoting higher levels of employee engagement, a key factor enabling enterprises to navigate the current storms of economic, labor, and technological disruption.

Additionally, the survey revealed that:

- ▶ Organizations pursuing collaborative work management progress through four distinct stages: **Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert**.
- ▶ Beginner and Intermediate organizations see focused advancement on specific metrics in targeted teams while the broad benefits for collaborative work management accrue to those who push through to the advanced or expert stages.
- ▶ To be successful at all stages, organizations need to appoint champions who have sufficient authority to convince others to engage with the program and target key departments whose role encourages collaboration.
- ▶ Unlike other initiatives, the key resource to push maturity forward is not executives (who are already extraordinarily involved during the beginner and intermediate stages) but rather project managers and other team coordinators— individuals with professional expertise in the organization of work tasks across multiple teams.

The transition from beginning to explore the use of collaborative work management (beginner stage) to the intentional use of collaborative work and management tools to drive value streams pulled by customers (expert) is one of constant innovation and elaboration. Organizations start with a focus on a few key metrics (described below) and a single team, then progressively elaborate until achieving broad benefits across the entire enterprise.

In today’s work environment, it comes as no surprise that executives are highly involved with the transformation of work. The survey shows early executive involvement in collaborative work management efforts, even though those efforts are primarily focused at the team level. Organizations who successfully move up to higher stages, however, will temper this focus through the appointment of peer coaches who provide confidential support to those at the same stage of their career journey.

Organizations who successfully move up to higher stages, however, will temper this focus through the appointment of peer coaches who provide **confidential usage and technical support** to those at the same stage of their career journey.

Interestingly, organizations who wish to move beyond coordinating work within teams show a strong tendency to involve project management professionals. This makes sense, as the discipline of project management is, quite literally, the discipline of organizing work across teams toward a specified goal. Although the survey specified project managers, some anecdotal evidence points to other “coordination professionals” including financial department members embedded in different departments.



IDC Definition of Collaborative Work Management

For the purpose of this study, IDC adopted the following definition for collaborative work management:

An effort of people working together for a common purpose with a presumption that everyone can add value and improve productivity with better management of work across a team, department, or organization with the assistance of collaboration technology tools.

A collaborative work management platform (CWM platform) is a suite of tools specifically designed to manage and/or act on units of work across a team, department, or organization in a collaborative manner. This platform must also provide or coordinate tools that enable visibility into the work efficiency, workflow management, knowledge management, and work/social collaboration enabled by the platform.

Four Stages: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Expert

IDC research indicates that the adoption of CWM platforms falls into four distinct stages: **Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert.**



Beginners focus on organizing a single team's work, generally using a variety of pre-existing tools and, fittingly, they are most likely to establish, monitor, and optimize processes at the team level with a specific focus on project and task progress visibility.

Beginner:

Led by executives, the small team responsible for CWM takes on the task of identifying their goals and clarifying roles while attempting to identify opportunities for integration across their toolsets.

Beginners focus on organizing a single team's work, generally using a variety of pre-existing tools and, fittingly, they are most likely to establish, monitor, and optimize processes at the team level with a specific focus on project and task progress visibility. Beginners generally have three to four employees who take on CWM as their primary role, probably as a special project or a career advancement opportunity. Their work is spread out across 11 and 13 tools, and predictably seems to consist of codifying work practices and consolidating the number of tools into a manageable digital workspace.

Beginners see some improvements in visibility and workflow, but the results are inconsistent and isolated, with on average only one of the metrics surveyed improving more than 50%. This is in keeping with the early stage of the work;

most beginners report they still have at least 50% of the work ahead of them to improve their collaboration, efficiency, knowledge management, visibility, and workflows. Doing this work at a team level, although necessary to move to the next stage, is nevertheless time-consuming and with limited immediate impact.

Beginners tend to look at the focus team's performance to determine the success of their project, looking for improvements to teamwork-based metrics (35%), overall results of the team (33%), and individual productivity reviews (32%). This suggests that the beginners are just “testing the waters”, running a pilot project before making a larger commitment to collaborative work management.

Intermediate:

Led by executives, the small team responsible for CWM turns their attention to a broad swath of problems—ranging from culture to security to integrations—that impede collaboration across the organization.

Intermediate organizations broaden their focus from a single team to a line of business or other discrete operating entity with a focus on cross-team workflows (30% of respondents show a 50% or greater improvement, as opposed to 9% of beginners). The reduction of tools initiated at the beginner phase has mostly concluded, with organizations at this level reporting using between five and six tools regularly while the core team has also reduced in size from three to four members to two to three.

Intermediate practitioners begin to see broader improvements as their efforts extend beyond the team, on average seeing two or more business metrics improve over 50% in the categories of collaboration, efficiency, knowledge management, visibility, and workflows. Just as importantly, the majority of intermediate organizations see some improvement (improvement greater than zero) across all measures and categories, but it is not always significant enough to dramatically improve performance.

Intermediate companies, like beginners, focus on teamwork-based metrics (34%) and reviews of individual productivity (32%). However, they also shift their focus to measuring time to result (34%, up from 24% in beginners), an indication of their broader scope. In modern enterprises, it is rare for a single team to deliver results; instead, groups coordinate across teams to deliver meaningful results to employees and customers.

Advanced:

Led by project managers and executives, the small team responsible for CWM comes face-to-face with complex questions about security and privacy, while integration issues continue to plague their work. They see themselves as using



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a narrow range of tools (four or more on average), likely in an attempt to manage the scope of increasingly complex integration issues.

Advanced organizations begin to broadly use CWM across teams and departments, work which requires specific knowledge and a mature organizational discipline. The survey results show a dramatic increase in the number of respondents indicating that project managers are involved in all aspects of the effort (from 47% in the beginner phase to 72% in the advanced phase) with an equally dramatic drop in the presence of consultants (42% in beginner phase, 25% in the advanced phase). This work is supported by a team of three to four people, rather than the two to three in the previous stage.



Advanced practitioners see improvements across all key areas with collaboration and visibility showing the most substantial improvements.

Advanced practitioners see improvements across all key areas (collaboration, efficiency, knowledge management, visibility, and workflow) with collaboration and visibility showing the most substantial improvements, each with three or more metrics showing 50% of greater improvement over time.

Advanced practitioners use their radically enhanced task efficiency to review the actions taken by team members (41% of respondents), teamwork-based metrics (39% of respondents), and actions completed (38% of respondents). The increased visibility and knowledge management available during this phase allow the organization to focus on driving efficiency in addition to pushing for overall results. Managing this level of organizational information must be handled with care, however — decades of research show that intense micromanagement can quickly lead to employee disengagement, which leads in turn to a rapid decline in both productivity and customer engagement.

This phase is the tipping point, where the organization shifts from “working collaboratively” to an organized and formal process of collaborative work management reaching from the executive to the individual contributor level. The surveyed contours of this phase match the contours of a relatively mature “hybrid work” organization from IDC’s Future of Work research — an organization in which the culture and leadership have adapted to support a digital-first approach to work in an organization which has transitioned from digital transformation to digital operations.

Expert:

Led by executives, project managers, and managers, the larger team (almost twice the size of the intermediate maturity stage) must now resolve the complex security and privacy issues faced earlier while pushing for cultural changes and integrations into core work systems.

Expert-level organizations show a marked increase in both the number of tools involved (up to 17 on average) and the number of employees who take on primary responsibility for the work (from an average of three to four to an average of five



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to six). These two upticks are directly related; as expert organizations seek to bring more and more cross-enterprise work into the collaborative management system, they need additional integrations to do so (additional systems) and human beings to do that automation work (the additional team members).

Expert organizations see a corresponding broad increase across all five areas of measurement, with four or more metrics improving in collaboration efficiency, knowledge management, visibility, and workflows. Despite strong results, these organizations still see that they have work ahead of them, with over 70% saying there is still work to do in all five areas. A strong majority see themselves in an optimizing phase of work (28%) although, surprisingly, 19% say they are in a building phase. This may refer to the ongoing integration work which characterizes the expert phase.

Over 50% of organizations at this level measure teamwork, actions completed, and time to results for teams using CWM. This is consistent with the advanced phase, but the larger number of integrations suggests that the organization has started to apply the theory of constraints—analyzing barriers and removing them in the order of the largest constraint first, rather than focusing on individual employee performance and “task management” as the key factors for accelerating productivity.

Organizations, having achieved this level, have already removed all of the “low hanging fruit” of productivity and collaboration improvement. They are left with the hardest, and most costly, challenges—challenges which resolving may not necessarily lead to more revenue, efficiency, or profit than it costs to resolve them. Therefore, organizations striving to achieve this maturity stage will typically do so for reasons related to risk, compliance, or a need to innovate in order to meet an existential crisis.



Expert organizations see a corresponding broad increase across all five areas of measurement, with four or more metrics improving in collaboration efficiency, knowledge management, visibility, and workflows.



Key Findings and Outcomes

The following key findings and outcomes emerged from the study:

- ✓ Pace of Work and Investment Across Stages
- ✓ Early Versus Later-stage Improvements
- ✓ Improved Business Metrics
- ✓ Critical Visibility Improvements Across Stages
- ✓ Critical Task Efficiency Improvements Across Stages
- ✓ Critical Workflow Improvements Across Stages
- ✓ Critical Knowledge Management Improvements Across Stages
- ✓ Critical Collaboration Improvements Across Stages
- ✓ Critical Organizational Challenges Across Stages

Pace of Work and Investment Across Stages

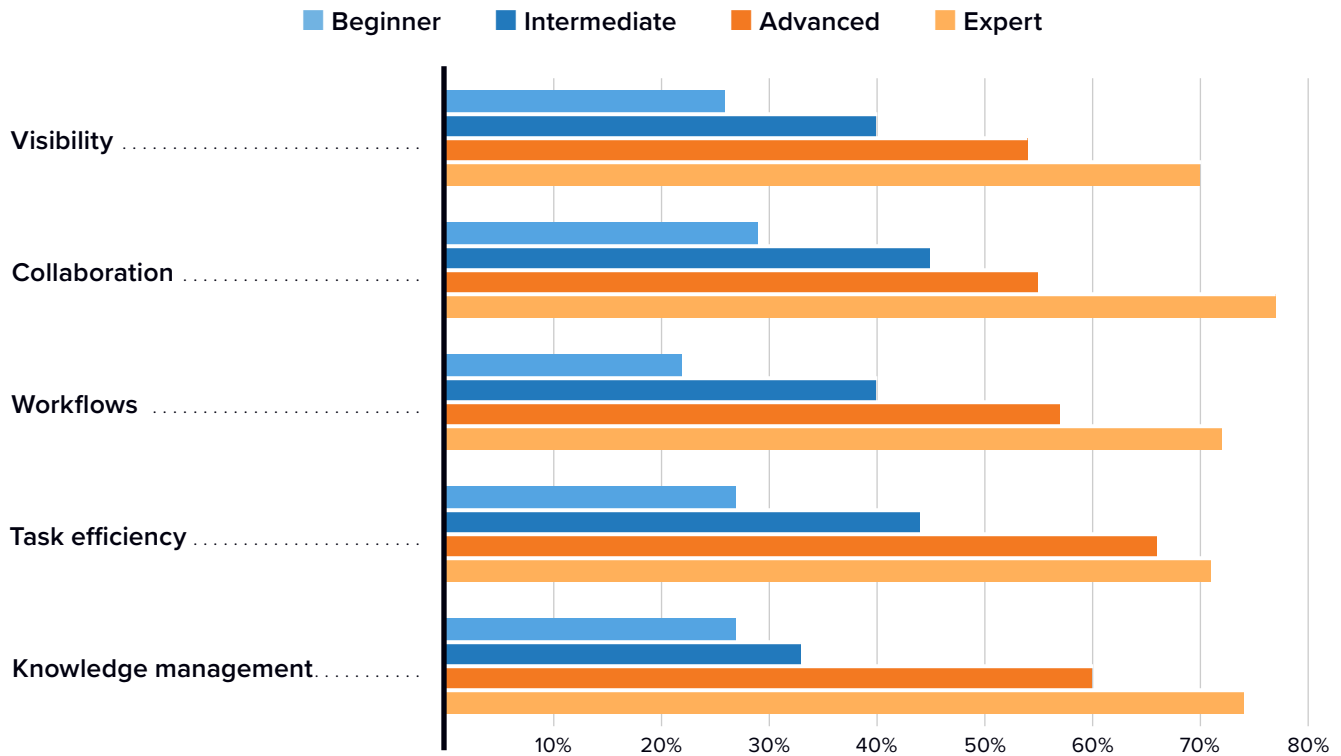
The people, process, and technology work of implementing a CWM platform progresses at a relatively steady rate throughout the course of the maturity cycle (see **Figure 1**, next page):

FIGURE 1

CWM Operational Areas Complete by Maturity Level

For each of these dimensions in CWM (Collaborative Work Management), rate where your team, department, organization stands in its initial implementation.

(Respondents indicating more than 75% complete)



n = 610; Source: IDC's ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study, February 2023

For an accessible version of the data in this figure, see [Figure 1 Supplemental Data](#) in the Appendix 1.

It is notable that progress on completing the work around task efficiency jumps dramatically in the advanced stage (from 44% to 66% complete, a 22% jump) before slowing in the leap between advanced and expert (from 66% to 71%, a 5% increase). This is partially mirrored by the sudden jump in knowledge management from a lagging intermediate progression (33% compared to 40% work complete for other areas) to 66% complete by the advanced stage.

This suggests that as the enterprise shifts its attention from clusters of teams to an entire line of business, they find it necessary to clearly define the tasks to be done (task efficiency) and aggregate information about how, when, and why to complete those tasks (knowledge management). This observation helps to frame the transitions presented below as the enterprise gains significant improvements in the advanced and expert stages.

Early Versus Later-stage Improvements

In general, there are early and sustainable improvements in task efficiency and knowledge management starting at the beginner level and improving (or at least holding steady) through advanced maturity. Interestingly, the advanced stage shows outsized improvements in task efficiency (14% over the previous stage), workflows (26% over the previous stage), and collaboration (17% over the previous stage) (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Overall Improvement in CWM Operational Areas in Past 12 Months

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Visibility	26%	31%	24%	36%
Collaboration	29%	21% ↓	30%	47% ↑
Workflows	31%	29%	22% ↓	48% ↑
Task efficiency	36%	33%	36%	50% ↑
Knowledge management	31%	32%	28%	36%
Team size	3.5	2.8 ↓	3.1 ↓	5.3 ↑

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

The sudden drops in collaboration from beginner to intermediate and in workflows from intermediate to advanced seem out of place in the general upward value progress. However, these are likely the result of the underlying change in scope as the participants moved up the maturity stages. Remember that beginners typically involve a single team or perhaps a few teams associated with a specific work product. Intermediate organizations expand to include an entire department or line of business, while advanced and expert organizations seek to provide benefits across the entire enterprise. The transition from intermediate to advanced is particularly punishing for workflows, as there is a need for much broader integration and a larger team to sustain those integrations, as seen in the transition to the advanced stage.

Improved Business Metrics

As businesses progress through the maturity stages, they begin to look at business metrics which make greater impact on operational effectiveness (Table 2).

TABLE 2

Top 3 Business Metrics by Maturity Stage

Improving which of the following business outcomes are the main targets for your organization’s CWM initiatives?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Top	Improved Operational Efficiency	Improved Operational Efficiency	Employee Retention	Improved Operational Efficiency
Second	Employee Productivity	Improved Innovation	Improved Operational Risk Profile	Improved Innovation
Third	Shorter Time to Market	Shorter Time to Market	Improved Operational Efficiency	Shorter Time to Market

n = 610; Source: IDC’s ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study, February 2023

In aggregate (above), Collaborative Work Management is seen as a way to improve operational efficiency over time, leading to shorter time to market for the organization’s goods and services. This is a strategic and operational imperative in the market conditions prevalent in 2023–2025, and an operational imperative even in less trying economic times. Advanced organizations begin to explore the relationship between employee retention and efficiency, with expert organizations shifting back to efficiency and innovation driving shorter times to market.

The advanced stage seems to be an anomaly, with its focus on retention, risk, and operational efficiency. However, all three of these are department or line-of-business level business functions — talent management, risk management, and department effectiveness. This “shift” in the metrics that matter, therefore, is consistent with the underlying shift of program scope from teams and clusters of teams to a line of business.

Critical Visibility Improvements Across Stages

When reviewed at an enterprise level (50% of greater improvement in at least 30% of cases), visibility in all metrics does not measurably improve until a significant portion of the enterprise participates in the CWM initiative. However, even at the beginner level (within a single team or cluster of teams) there is immediate marked improvement (25% to 49% improvement overall) in the visibility of project status and the time spent to complete tasks (Table 3).

TABLE 3
Visibility Metrics with Greater than 50% Improvement in More than 30% of Respondents

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved your team’s visibility into the following?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Realtime project status	✗	✗	✗	✓
Current resource allocation	✗	✗	✓	✓
Relationship between work and OKR	✗	✗	✓	✓
Potential roadblocks	✗	✗	✓	✓
Time spent to complete tasks	✗	✗	✓	✓
What teams or individuals work on	✗	✗	✓	✓
How priorities direct what individuals work on	✗	✗	✓	✓
Amount of context switching between tasks	✗	✗	✓	✓

n = 610; Source: IDC’s *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

For additional data, see [Table 3 Additional Data](#) in the Appendix 2.

Critical Task Efficiency Improvements Across Stages

The majority of the enterprise-level benefits that CWM brings accrue, unsurprisingly, to organizations who have an enterprise-level focus for their implementations. This likely reflects the highly interconnected nature of the hybrid work environment—no matter what individual improvements an employee or team might achieve, they are highly dependent on inputs from other parts of the organization and the rest of the organization is just as dependent on them (Table 4).

At a team level, beginners start to see improvements in their ability to avoid searching for information/context, on reporting, and on their ability to deliver on time, with a substantial number (greater than 40%) reporting 25% to 49% improvement in those areas.

TABLE 4
Task Efficiency Metrics with Greater than 50% Improvement in More than 30% of Respondents

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved the efficiency of your workers in the following ways?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Reduced context switching required to complete work	✗	✗	✓	✓
Necessary systems (people, process, technology) in place to measure and optimize efficiency	✗	✗	✓	✓
Improved output and capacity per resource	✗	✗	✓	✓
Reduced time spent searching or asking for information/context	✗	✗	✓	✓
Reduced time spent on manual updates and progress reporting	✗	✗	✓	✓
Improved ability to deliver on time	✗	✗	✓	✓

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

For additional data, see [Table 4 Additional Data](#) in the Appendix 2.

Critical Workflow Improvements Across Stages

The majority of the benefits to workflow accrue to organizations at the advanced or expert level, although even advanced organizations lag in terms of the extent to which they can automate workflows across the enterprise until achieving the level of integration needed to perform at the expert level.

Interestingly, we see substantial benefits as early as the intermediate level in project coordination through cross-team workflows. Logically this follows with the shifting focus of the organizations surveyed; the higher the maturity level, the more teams involved and therefore the more valuable workflows become (Table 5).

The survey revealed team-level improvements (25% to 49%) as early as the beginner stage in interoperability across core technology systems and teams able to configure workflow independently with near misses in just about every other category. An individual team or small cluster of teams does gain good benefits for themselves during the initial implementation but the requirements of integration and negotiation for larger workflows slows their value generation outside of the immediate group.

TABLE 5
Workflow Metrics with Greater than 50% Improvement in More than 30% of Respondents

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved your team’s workflows in the following ways?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Integration across core technology systems	✗	✗	✓	✓
Standardized processes across work life cycle	✗	✗	✓	✓
Teams are able to configure workflow independently	✗	✗	✓	✓
Project coordination through cross-team workflows	✗	✓	✓	✓
Extent of automated processes currently implemented	✗	✗	✗	✓
Standardized processes across cross-functional/departmental workflows	✗	✗	✓	✓

n = 610; Source: IDC’s ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study, February 2023

For additional data, see [Table 5 Additional Data](#) in the Appendix 2.

Critical Knowledge Management Improvements Across Stages

The majority of the benefits for knowledge management accrue to advanced and expert practitioners, as information and the structure of creating it accumulates within the system (Table 6). However, even advanced practitioners have trouble with providing important project information and context at scale (likely due to the amount of information involved) and intermediate organizations gain some benefit in applying information to decision making.

Beginner organizations see team-level benefits in reducing the time spent seeking information, applying that information to decision making, and a clearer understanding of how to work with other teams and departments. Having the relevant information in one place, accessible to the team or cluster of teams, brings some degree of immediate value to the organization.

TABLE 6
Knowledge Management Metrics with Greater than 50% Improvement in More than 30% of Respondents

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved these aspects of knowledge management within your team?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Reduced time spent looking for information	✗	✗	✓	✓
Improved ability to apply information in decision making and project execution	✗	✓	✓	✓
Higher levels of contribution to and use of company/team wikis	✗	✗	✓	✓
Better understanding of how to work with other teams and departments	✗	✗	✓	✓
Greater availability of important project information and context	✗	✗	✗	✓
Greater availability of project data to analyze and optimize processes	✗	✗	✓	✓

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

For additional data, see [Table 6 Additional Data](#) in the Appendix 2.

Critical Collaboration Improvements Across Stages

Collaborative work management is one of several tools used for collaboration, and the need to integrate across departments in order to drive enterprise-level metrics is clearly shown in the table above. Even at the advanced level, there are spotty enterprise-grade improvements in the collaboration environment—only when the tools begin to integrate at the expert level do we see consistent, strong gains (Table 7).

As with the other areas, there are strong team gains (25% to 40% improvements) to be seen as early as the beginner stage. These are particularly prominent in project communications and individual communication (within and across teams) who are using the same CWM tool across those teams.

TABLE 7
Collaboration Metrics with Greater than 50% Improvement in More than 30% of Respondents

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved your team’s collaboration in the following areas?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Projects take place in a hybrid workplace	✗	✗	✓	✓
Project communications	✗	✗	✓	✓
Ideation	✗	✗	✓	✓
Live multi-person editing	✗	✗	✗	✓
Individuals within a team	✗	✗	✓	✓
Individuals across teams	✗	✗	✓	✓
Communication and collaboration with external partners	✗	✗	✗	✓
Ability to use same CWM tool across all teams	✗	✗	✗	✓

n = 610; Source: IDC’s ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study, February 2023

For additional data, see [Table 7 Additional Data](#) in the Appendix 2.

Critical Organizational Challenges Across Stages

The key challenges faced by organizations change as they move up the maturity scale (Table 8). In the beginner stage the challenges faced are primarily about organization—goals, roles, and tools. Moving into the intermediate stage, organizations begin to confront challenges around culture and privacy. In the advanced stage, privacy becomes the primary concern, with interoperability of tools and integration vying for the second and third spots. As organizations progress into the advanced stage, privacy remains the overriding concern, with challenges of culture, access, and integration continuing to direct the conversation.

The transition into the advanced stage reintroduces problems with lack of access and organizational culture which have already been addressed at the more constrained intermediate scope. This suggests a need for additional organizational change management resources, as well as a potential reconsideration of the portfolio of collaborative work management platforms used in the enterprise.

TABLE 8
Top Three Barriers by Maturity Stage

What are the main challenges in managing and promoting the use of CWM in the organization?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Top	Inconsistent Roles for CWM	Organizational Culture works against Collaboration	Privacy and Security	Privacy and Security
Second	Unclear Goals for CWM	Privacy and Security Concerns	Interoperability of CWM Platforms	Lack of Access to CWM Platforms
Third	Interoperability of CWM Platforms	Lack of Access to or Interoperability of CWM Platforms	CWM not integrated with core	Organizational culture works against collaboration

n = 610; Source: IDC's ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study, February 2023



Improving Collaborative Work Management Maturity

Taking on collaborative work management does not have to be an impossible task. The organizations surveyed in this study took clear, discrete, actionable steps which helped them to move from a position of disorganized, siloed work and overwhelmingly complex centralized workflows to a functional model for hybrid productivity.

All Organizations: Take These Steps First

At the start of their collaborative work management effort, all organizations should take the following steps:

1. **Involve the project management or equivalent organization early in the process, preferably in the beginning.** In particular, the team looking to build out the CWM process should use project manager (or equivalent positions) expertise in organizing work both within and across teams and using them to advocate for the effort with whatever centralized organizational structure supports such efforts.
2. **Select at least one, but more likely two, collaborative work management platforms at the beginning.** A team should generally pick and work with one tool which specifically meets their needs and have a second platform included

in their design. This second platform will likely conform to an enterprise standard and the team's primary platform should integrate with it.

3. **For an enterprise, manage the development of collaborative work management as any other large transformational program, with the intent of achieving lasting, sustained change and a mix of matrixed, project, and permanent roles.** This will prove especially important as the organization matures past the intermediate stage and begins to engage with the larger corporate culture.
4. **Adopt both an executive sponsorship structure and a peer mentoring structure at the beginning of the effort.** An executive sponsor can help to ease budget and organizational concerns, as well as acting as a champion for the effort at the organization's highest levels. At the same time, peer support at every organizational level will allow individuals to approach people at their own organizational level to get help, greatly speeding up the adoption process.

Transitioning from Beginner to Intermediate

In a substantial way, both the beginner and intermediate stages represent the building up of collaborative work management from a single team throughout a line of business. The benefits from both are felt at the team level and many of the measurements make sense primarily when looking at the performance of teams or teams of teams rather than the entire organization.

To move through the beginner phase, an organization should:

1. **Clarify the roles responsible for implementing collaborative work management.** In particular, identify who will work with the team in the long term and who is involved primarily for specific technical or procedural knowledge they hold. The core team members should be permanently assigned to the CWM program, while those with specific knowledge should treat the effort as a project, expecting to be reassigned as needed.
2. **Identify one of the two selected CWM platforms to act as a central "hub" for the initial effort.** Logically, this should be the platform best suited to the needs of the team attempting to pilot CWM; however, some attention should be paid to make sure that the platform will work for others within the same line of business.
3. **Apply the theory of constraints to rapidly reduce the requested number of integrations and shrink the number of applications involved.** Although at

first glance it may seem like there are an impossible number of integrations required, evidence from later stages suggests there should be no more than five to seven systems that actually need to be coordinated. The theory of constraints suggests removing the most impactful barrier first, then the next most impactful, until the system can perform at an acceptable level.

4. **Begin identifying workflows and tasks that require contribution from the entire line of business early in the beginner phase.** This work will enable the theory of constraints exercise (above) and prepare the way for a more rapid transition through the stages.

Transitioning from Intermediate to Advanced

The transition from intermediate to advanced behaviors is a state change, with the tools of collaborative work management stretching beyond a single line of business to form value streams beginning with the customer and pulling through the entire organization.

Broadly, the work in this phase revolves around consolidating gains within a single line of business. However, preparing for moving to the broader instantiation required to reach advanced level can be accelerated by:

1. **Intentionally working with a highly collaborative function like finance to establish an initial interest in collaborative work management.** Other highly collaborative functions include vendor management, human resources, corporate strategy, and the enterprise program management office (if one exists and it is not already engaged).
2. **Beginning to establish a broader peer mentoring network within the organization.** In particular, focus on making sure there are peer mentors available at each organizational level (direct contributor, manager, and executive) who are both well respected and willing to take the time to help their peers succeed.
3. **If it exists, working with the enterprise organizational excellence or operational excellence team to engage line-of-business (LoB) leadership in regular workshops,** laying out how the CWM platform can address key LoB-level challenges.
4. **Working with the security and internal auditing teams to pre-emptively identify key privacy and security concerns.**

Transitioning from Advanced to Expert

The transition from advanced to expert requires a sudden and somewhat painful shift from optimizing and refining ways of working to rapidly integrating numerous systems together in a digital value stream. This work, although vital, requires automation and may require specific programming skills outside the expertise of the core team.

The team can prepare to accelerate this transition by:

1. **Working again with the theory of constraints, identifying the integrations required to substantially automate the enterprise value streams that the key collaborative functions recruited during the previous acceleration activities.** This will help organize and structure the integration work that characterizes the advanced stage, as well as structuring the return on investment (ROI) analysis that this shift to technical work will entail.
2. **Using the identified integrations to identify and engage the required technical personnel early,** avoiding the average 10-month delay IDC's recent surveys have found in technical projects.
3. **Working directly with the CWM platform vendor to make sure they have the identified integrations available,** preferably accessible to non-technical staff.

Maintaining an Expert Organization

Having run up the hill to achieve an expert level of organization, capabilities, and technology, it can seem like the organization has actually stepped backwards. By opening the scope to the entire enterprise, problems once settled, including seemingly simple things like which platform to use, suddenly get reopened.

At this stage:

1. **Resist the enterprise's temptation to focus only on the seemingly overwhelming amount of technical work required for this stage's integrations.** Use the program structure established and maintained earlier to bring in a wide range of management and communications talent as needed, with a specific focus on being clear, concise, and consistent in all enterprise messaging.

2. **Review the goals and metrics established in the advanced stage and develop a more robust OKR stack reflecting various cross-departmental concerns.** This will allow the team to quickly show value to the broader organization, building momentum and commitment for further implementations.
3. **Work with your CWM platform vendors and their user communities to deploy as many out-of-the-box integrations as possible.** This allows the team to focus their attention on complex, customized integrations to core work systems like Oracle or SAP.





Conclusion

Highly mature collaborative work organizations show strong, persistent, and far-reaching improvements along all of the aspects of operational effectiveness including collaboration, knowledge management, task efficiency, visibility, and workflow. At low levels of maturity these benefits are primarily concentrated into individual key metrics at the team level, becoming increasing broad and diverse as the organization grows.

These benefits give CWM a substantial role to play in the “new normal” of hybrid work, labor and skill constraints, moderate interest rates, and unfolding financial turmoil. Being able to do more with less and with a higher degree of accuracy, control, and employee engagement will help distinguish between companies who languish and those that thrive in the era of digital operations.

Appendix 1: Supplemental Data

This appendix provides an accessible version of the data for any complex figures in the document. Click “Return to original figure” to get back to the original data figure.

FIGURE 1 SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

CWM Operational Areas Complete by Maturity Level

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Visibility	26%	40%	54%	70%
Collaboration	29%	45%	55%	77%
Workflows	22%	40%	57%	72%
Task efficiency	27%	44%	66%	71%
Knowledge management	27%	33%	60%	74%

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

[Return to original figure](#)

Appendix 2: Additional Data

This appendix provides additional data for Tables 3–7. The following tables show the average improvement, instead of the percentage of respondents that showed >50% improvement. Click “Return to original figure” to get back to the original table.

TABLE 3 ADDITIONAL DATA

Visibility Metrics — Average Improvement Due to Implementation of CWM

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved your team’s visibility into the following?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Realtime Project Status	28%	40%	42%	57%
Current Resource Allocation	25%	41%	48%	60%
Relationship between work and ORK	26%	38%	42%	63%
Potential Roadblocks	23%	36%	47%	54%
Time spent to Complete Tasks	28%	35%	44%	61%
What teams or individuals work on	26%	35%	49%	61%
How priorities direct what individuals work on	28%	39%	49%	67%
Amount of context switching between tasks	26%	41%	48%	64%

n = 610; Source: IDC’s *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

[Return to original table](#)

Appendix 2: Additional Data (continued)

TABLE 4 ADDITIONAL DATA

Task Efficiency Metrics — Average Improvement Due to Implementation of CWM

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved the efficiency of your workers in the following ways?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Reduced context switching required to complete work	30%	44%	52%	66%
Necessary systems (people, process, technology) in place to measure and optimize efficiency	26%	41%	53%	70%
Improved output and capacity per resource	27%	42%	49%	70%
Reduced time spent searching or asking for information/context	28%	41%	54%	70%
Reduced time spent on manual updates and progress reporting	27%	41%	50%	63%
Improved ability to deliver on time	31%	40%	48%	69%

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

[Return to original table](#)

TABLE 5 ADDITIONAL DATA

Workflow Metrics — Average Improvement Due to Implementation of CWM

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved your team's workflows in the following ways?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Integration across core technology systems	28%	41%	48%	66%
Standardized processes across work lifecycle	28%	43%	48%	67%
Teams are able to configure workflow independently	29%	40%	50%	62%
Project coordination through cross-team workflows	31%	46%	51%	63%
Extent of automated processes currently implemented	27%	41%	44%	67%
Standardized processes across cross-functional/departmental workflows	28%	41%	52%	66%

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023

[Return to original table](#)

Appendix 2: Additional Data (continued)

TABLE 6 ADDITIONAL DATA

Knowledge Management Metrics — Average Improvement Due to Implementation of CWM

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved these aspects of knowledge management within your team?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Reduced time spent looking for information	30%	40%	51%	68%
Improved ability to apply information in decision making and project execution	29%	44%	44%	59%
Higher levels of contribution to and use of company/team wikis	27%	38%	49%	70%
Better understanding of how to work with other teams and departments	29%	44%	53%	72%
Greater availability of important project information and context	28%	38%	48%	70%
Greater availability of project data to analyze and optimize processes	27%	43%	50%	71%

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023. [Return to original table](#)

TABLE 7 ADDITIONAL DATA

Collaboration Metrics — Average Improvement Due to Implementation of CWM

To what degree has the implementation of CWM tools and processes improved your team's collaboration in the following areas?

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Projects take place in a hybrid workplace	30%	40%	52%	73%
Project Communications	30%	42%	49%	67%
Ideation	28%	43%	51%	66%
Live multi-person editing	33%	39%	47%	72%
Individuals within a team	33%	42%	53%	63%
Individuals across teams	31%	42%	50%	60%
Communication and collaboration with external partners	29%	40%	47%	61%
Ability to use same CWM tool across all teams	28%	40%	43%	68%

n = 610; Source: IDC's *ClickUp Maturity Segmentation Study*, February 2023. [Return to original table](#)

About the IDC Analyst



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Message from the Sponsor



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