metrigy

Formerly of Nemertes Research

Quantifying the Benefit of Intelligent Virtual Assistants to Improve Meeting Experiences

AI-powered virtual assistants reduce costs and improve productivity

Q1 2021

Irwin Lazar
President and Principal Research Analyst
Metrigy

Table of Contents

www.metrigy.com

Executive Summary

Intelligent virtual assistants improve meeting experiences and increase productivity by automating in- and post-meeting tasks including transcription, note taking, and follow-on action item management. They also provide additional benefits including voice control of meetings and language translation. Metrigy assessed both the experiences and needs of more than 275 organizations to evaluate the potential of intelligent virtual assistants to provide demonstrable business value, while ensuring support for enterprise security and governance requirements. More than 41% of those using intelligent virtual meeting assistants have already documented their benefits, including:

- Eliminating 10 to 18 minutes of per-meeting follow up scheduling and task management
- Reducing or eliminating costs associated with meeting translation (averaging $172 per-meeting, per language)
- Improving team efficiency by storing meeting notes and transcripts within a team collaboration workspace for easy access
- Reducing meeting time by up to 40% due to more focused participation on meeting discussions and avoiding of distractions associated with note taking.

Buyers have a variety of options including virtual assistant capabilities integrated with meeting services, as well as virtual assistants offered as separate, standalone apps. Ensuring success requires addressing usability and cost, as well as security requirements to ensure information protection and compliance. Buyers rate support for end-to-end encryption and digital rights management to control distribution and access to meeting transcripts as their most important security needs.

Key recommendations for IT leaders include:

- Adopt intelligent virtual meeting assistants to improve in-meeting experiences and shorten time required for post-meeting tasks
- Evaluate the potential of virtual meeting assistants to save money by eliminating separate translation services
- Leverage transcription capabilities within virtual meeting assistants to optimize in-meeting interaction with non-native English speakers as well as for hearing-impaired meeting participants
- Leverage the ability of intelligent virtual meeting assistants to provide easier access to important discussion points and action items for both meetings attended and missed
- Consider intelligent virtual assistants that integrate with meeting platforms to ensure compliance with security and governance requirements, including support for end-to-end encryption, content access controls, and the ability to keep all meeting content within the same system as the meeting application itself.

www.metrigy.com

What Are Intelligent Virtual Meeting Assistants?

Intelligent Virtual Meeting Assistants (VMAs) provide a number of features designed to improve meeting experiences, capture action items and follow-on tasks, and make meetings more accessible for those who speak different native languages or with disabilities. Example capabilities include:

- The ability to use voice commands to start, manage, and end meetings, as well as capture or highlight key points or action items
- Real-time transcription and closed captioning of meeting audio
- Translation of source language into multiple other languages without requiring the use of separate translation services
- Highlighting and note taking of important points, presentation materials, or ideation content
- Labeling of active speakers to enable participants to see names of unfamiliar participants and for transcripts to assign captured speech to specific individuals
- Capture of action items and tasks for post-meeting processing, including scheduling of required follow-up meetings
- Establishment of a meeting transcript repository integrated with enterprise search capabilities
- Providing of accessibility features including speech-to-text
- Securing of meeting content and transcripts in accordance with governance and compliance requirements.

Virtual meeting assistants are increasingly available in three ways:

- As native features available within meeting platforms, with specific features available within different license types or at an additional cost
- As a third-party set of features available for additional cost from meeting providers
- As standalone applications.

State of Adoption

To address the state of adoption of virtual meeting assistants, Metrigy collected data from 276 organizations based in North America. Our pool of participants included 133 IT leaders responsible for meeting platform procurement and operations, as well as 143 end-users of meeting applications. Figure 1 shows the participant pool by company size. The majority of participants were midsize organizations (defined as 251-2,500 employees) or large companies (more than 2,501 employees).

Among participants, 42.8% use some form of an intelligent virtual meeting assistant today. An additional 43.6% are either
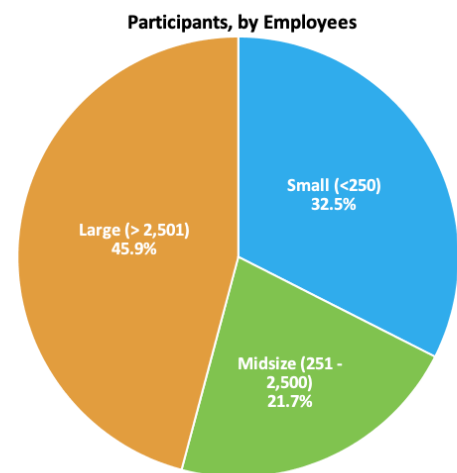

Participants, by Employees

- Small (<250) 32.5%
- Midsize (251 - 2,500) 21.7%
- Large (> 2,501) 45.9%

Figure 1 : Participants, by Employees

www.metrigy.com

evaluating intelligent virtual assistants, or planning to deploy them by the end of 2021.
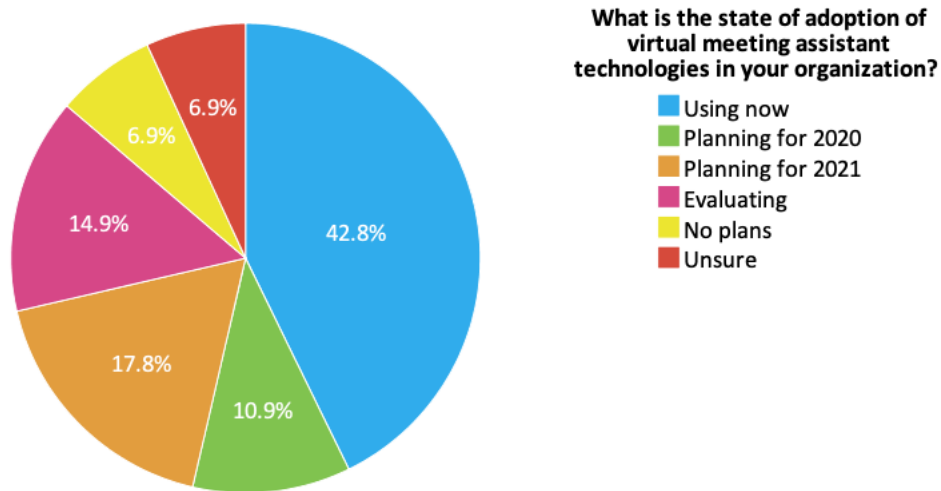
Virtual Assistant State of Adoption

Figure 2: Virtual Assistant State of Adoption

The majority (65.2%) using capabilities provided natively by their meeting vendor. Cisco customers are most likely to use built-in virtual assistant features.

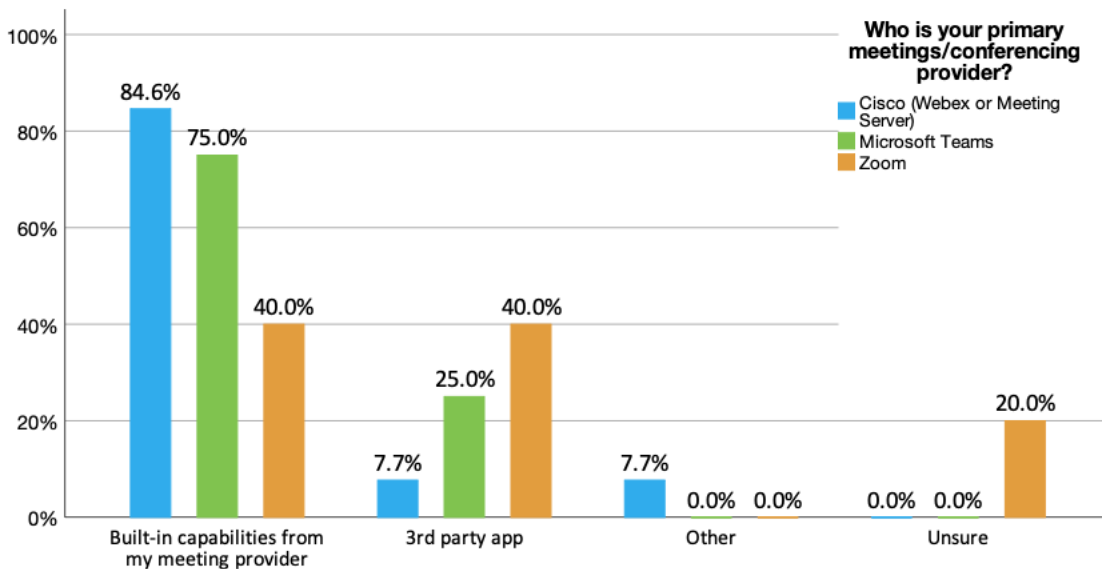**Virtual Assistant Provided, by Primary Meeting Vendor**

Figure 3: Virtual Assistant Provided, by Primary Meeting Vendor

©Metrigy Research Corp, 2021   www.metrigy.com

The following table provides an overview of virtual assistant capabilities provided by Cisco, Microsoft, and Zoom.

	Cisco Webex Virtual Assistant	Microsoft Cortana and Teams Meetings	Zoom Meetings
Voice control of meetings	✓	Join / schedule only	Zoom Rooms only
Action item creation	✓	Manual	Third-party apps
Note taking	✓	Manual	Third-party apps
Scheduling of future meetings	✓	✓	Manual
Meeting transcription and closed-captioning	✓	✓	Business and enterprise plans only, provided via otter.ai
In-meeting translation	✓	✓ Via Microsoft Translator	Interpreter only or third-party apps

Table 1: Virtual Assistant Comparison

Quantifying the Benefit

Virtual meeting assistants offer significant potential for return on investment by improving in-meeting experiences as well as post-meeting activities. Voice control of meeting applications and devices can shorten meeting start time, while transcription and translation costs can eliminate the need for costly third-party services. Among those using virtual assistants today, the majority cite productivity benefits as driving their adoption:

www.metrigy.com
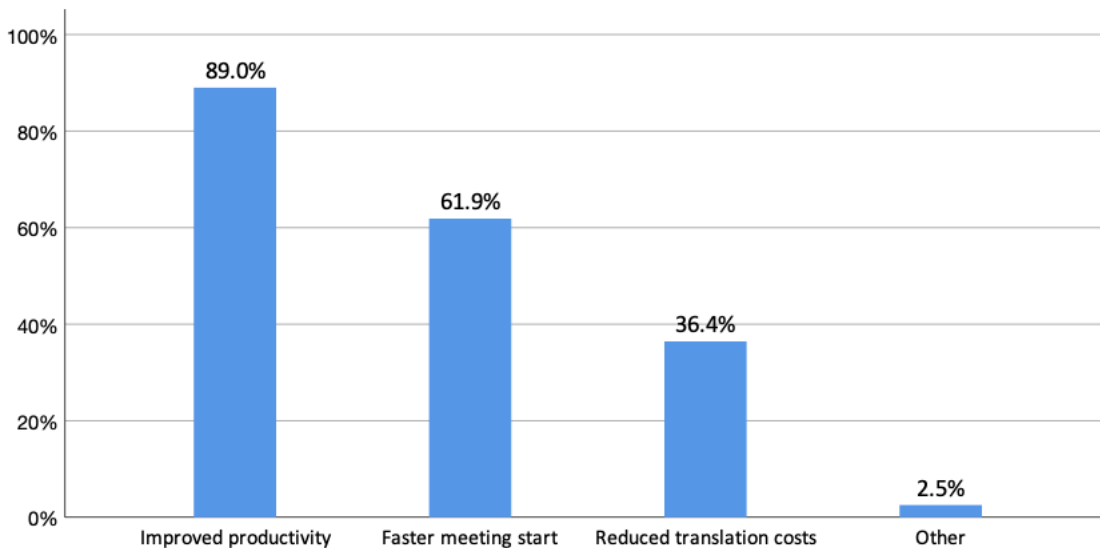
Virtual Assistant Investment Drivers

Figure 4: Virtual Assistant Investment Drivers

Quantifying the return on collaboration investments is often difficult and requires careful analysis and development of metrics to determine post-deployment improvements in productivity, as well as cost-savings. In total, more than 40% of those using virtual meeting assistants today have already documented such benefits. Examples include:

- Improved efficiency of meetings by eliminating the need for note taking and from having a common reference transcript
- Improved decision-making
- Effectively capturing the input of all meeting participants
- Improved capture and follow-up of action items
- Support for compliance requirements by automated storing of meeting transcripts with appropriate retention and DLP controls
- Improved meeting experiences better supporting the shift to work-from-home
- Improved measurement of meeting attendance and participation
- Employees paying more attention in meetings knowing that the meeting is being transcribed
- Increased ability to capture notes related to patient care for telehealth applications.

Time Savings and Productivity

To evaluate the quantifiable benefits of using an intelligent virtual assistant, Metrigy gathered data on the time spent on in-meeting, and post-meeting tasks. Those who do not currently use an intelligent virtual assistant spend, on average, on a per-meeting basis:

- 20.9 minutes scheduling follow-up meetings
- 27.7 minutes scheduling follow-on tasks

Assuming an intelligent virtual assistant can cut these post-meeting tasks to 10 minutes or less, incorporating an intelligent virtual assistant into meeting platforms can free up approximately 11 to 18 minutes of follow-up activity on a per-meeting basis.

Furthermore, participants say that they expect an intelligent virtual assistant could reduce or eliminate the time spent taking notes during each meeting resulting in average reduction in meeting times by up to 40% by allowing participants to remain focused on meeting discussions and avoiding distractions associated with manual note-taking.

Translation Services
Nearly 24% of participants have meetings that include non-English native speakers. Of those, 58.5% use third-party services to translate meeting transcripts into other languages, spending an average of $172 per meeting. Intelligent virtual meeting assistants, with language translation capabilities, can eliminate this cost entirely.

Meeting Recording
Approximately 77.2% of participants record at least some of their meetings for future playback. However just 26.2% will go back and watch part or all of a meeting they attended. Just 43.5% will do the same for meetings that they missed. An intelligent virtual assistant that creates not only transcripts, but also meeting highlights and action items, provides an easier way to ensure that those attending a meeting are able to refer back to key points and follow-up activities, as well as those who missed a meeting. In addition, virtual meeting assistants can potentially index content across multiple meetings, allowing individuals to easily find content relevant to them, without having to know the specific meeting in which it was discussed.

Team Collaboration Integration
Over the last several years, team collaboration workspaces have emerged as an alternative to email for workgroup messaging. Today, many meeting providers integrate their meeting applications with their team collaboration platform, enabling meetings to take place within the context of team channels. We asked participants to rate the importance of a virtual assistant to post transcripts and follow-up action items into a team channel: 44.7% rate this as important, 34.9% as vital.

Evaluating Features
To understand which intelligent virtual assistant capabilities are most important, we asked participants to rate features on a 1-4 scale (unimportant to must have). Note capture, searchable recorded transcripts and action item management were rated as the most important features (Please see Figure 5.)
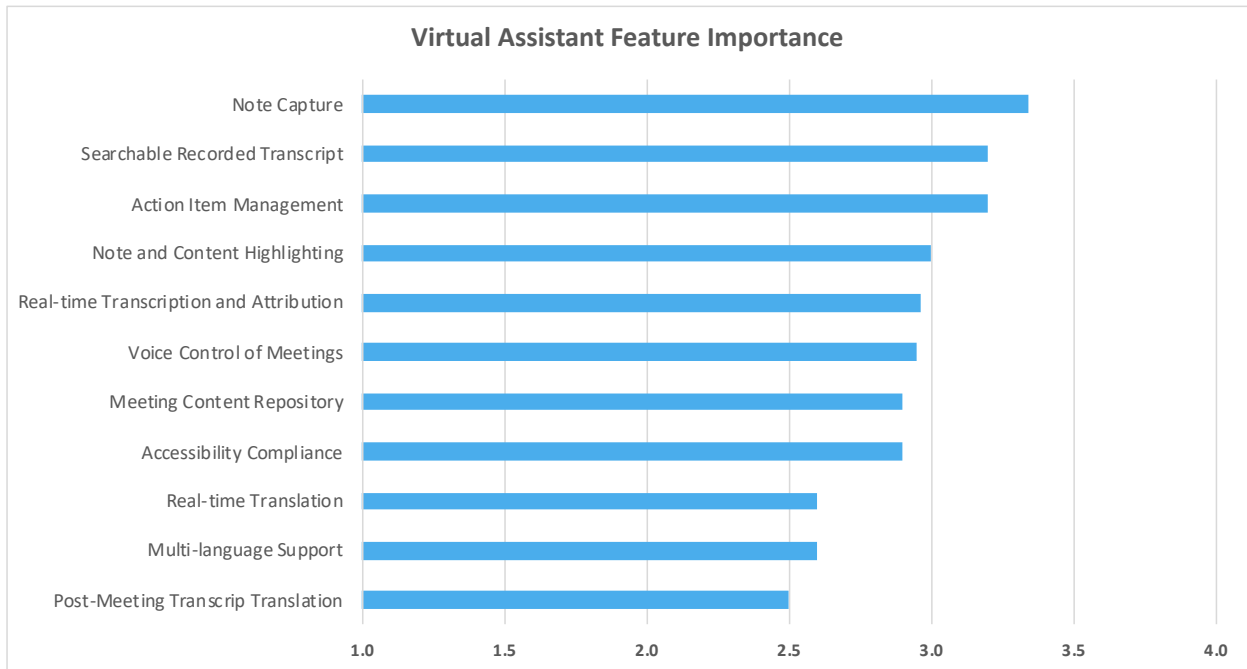
     www.metrigy.com

Figure 5: Virtual Assistant Feature Importance

Security and Compliance Considerations

Intelligent virtual assistants vary in their ability to meet enterprise security and compliance requirements. Those that are natively delivered as part of a meeting solution are likely to offer the same level of security features, such as end-to-end encryption, digital rights management, and access controls as the meeting service itself. Assistants that are delivered separately may require individualized security management, or may store transcripts and other content outside of the meeting service provider's network. In addition, some providers use of external entities for transcription and translation services, creating potential security vulnerabilities from loss of data.

Participants were asked to rate the importance of meeting content and transcript security features on a 1 to 4 scale ("unimportant" to "must-have"). On average, participants rated security features as important, with DRM and E2E controls considered most important.

©Metrigy Research Corp, 2021   www.metrigy.com
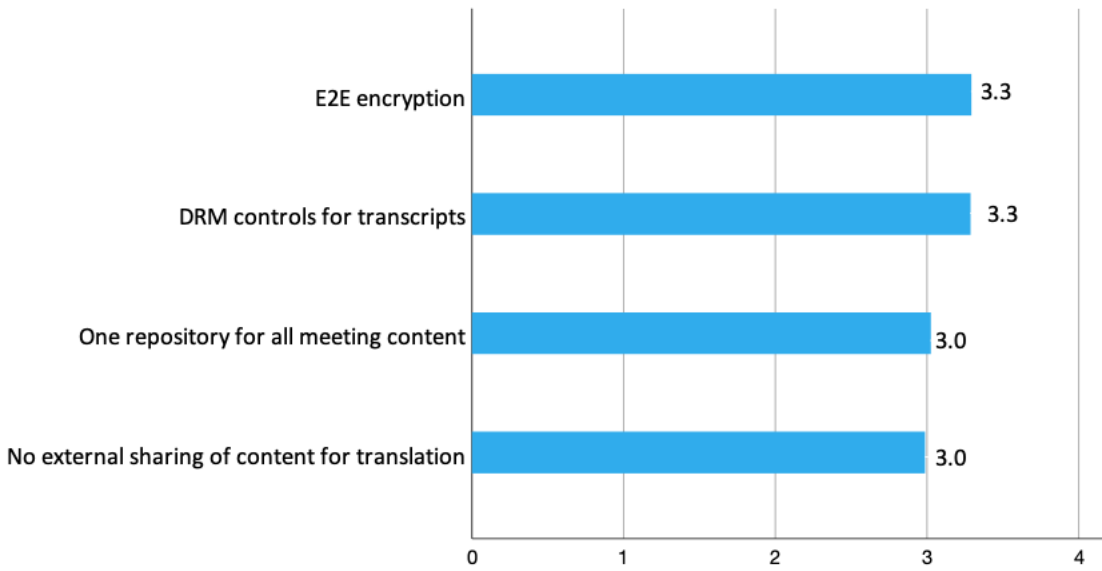
Security Feature Importance

Figure 7: Security Feature Importance

Additionally, 57.5% say they would select a virtual assistant provider based on the fact that the entire transcription process stays secure within its network and doesn't rely on third parties.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Intelligent virtual meeting assistants offer the potential to improve in-meeting experiences, reduce time spent on post-meeting tasks, and save money. However, not all virtual meeting assistants are created equal. Some are available as native features within meeting platforms, while others are delivered either as integrated separate products, or as complete standalone applications. To ensure that organizations achieve maximum benefit from intelligent virtual meeting assistants while ensuring compliance with security and governance requirements, IT leaders should:

- Adopt intelligent virtual meeting assistants to improve in-meeting experiences and shorten time required for post-meeting tasks
- Evaluate the potential of virtual meeting assistants to save money by eliminating separate translation to better support non-native English speakers
- Consider opportunities to use virtual meeting assistants to provide real-time transcription to improve meeting experiences for hearing-impaired individuals
- Leverage the ability of intelligent virtual meeting assistants to provide easier access to important discussion points and action items for both meetings attended and missed, as well as integrate storage of transcripts, action items, and other meeting content into team collaboration workspaces

          www.metrigy.com

- Evaluate intelligent virtual assistants integrate with meeting platforms to ensure compliance with security and governance requirements, including support for end-to-end encryption, access controls, and the ability to keep all meeting content within the same system as the meeting application itself.

ABOUT METRIGY: Metrigy is an innovative research firm focusing on the rapidly changing areas of Unified Communications & Collaboration (UCC), digital workplace, digital transformation, and Customer Experience (CX)/contact center—along with several related technologies. Metrigy delivers strategic guidance and informative content, backed by primary research metrics and analysis, for technology providers and enterprise organizations.

www.metrigy.com