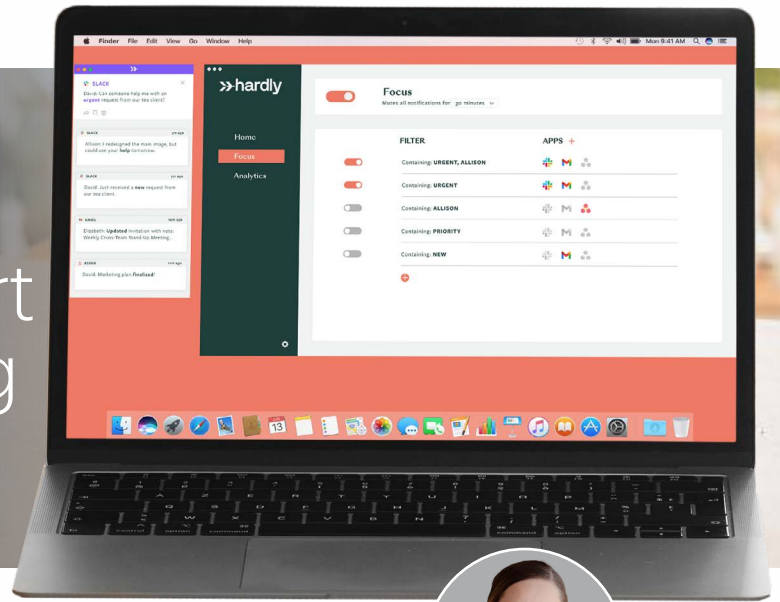**FUTURE OF WORK**

Innovative Technologies Support New Ways of Working

Tech is providing solutions to help employees stay productive, efficient and connected.

W ith many companies planning for a hybrid work environment, new technologies are emerging to support both in-office and remote work. From new software to help employees manage notifications, screen sharing features to enhance virtual presentations, and hardware tools to improve video conference calls, here are some examples of CTA members who are providing solutions for this new work environment.

Hardly Tackles "Notification Fatigue"

Hardly developed software to prioritize and organize notifications to reduce distractions. "Too many alerts lead to stress and missing important information. We need apps to consider people's changing priorities and needs for work and life," says CEO of Hardly Allison Braund-Harris.

Research shows notifications are a big issue for workers. In his latest book, _A World Without Email_, Cal Newport cites research that found workers checked a communication application every six minutes or less. More than two-thirds of the users never had more than an hour of uninterrupted time. Hardly connects notifications from various apps, allowing users to prioritize topics and senders. This feature permits relevant notifications while holding all others. When users want a break, they can choose to release the other notifications and browse their social media, news articles, personal emails and other potentially distracting content that was muted.

"Many people use notifications for collaboration and communication, so turning on do-not-disturb is not an option," says Braund-Harris. "As we begin to return to work and implement hybrid models, ensuring easy communication between in-person and remote workers will be crucial."

Microsoft Fosters Interactive Presentations

Microsoft recently announced plans to revamp PowerPoint sharing on Microsoft Teams. Reliance on video conferences has increased the need to seamlessly present slideshows, while maintaining control of the call and chat features. PowerPoint Live improves the presenting experience where the audience can navigate the slideshow at their own pace and interact with live links. Presenters can see their notes, the attendees, and the chat, while sharing slides. And Presenter Modes provides different ways to share video and presentations simultaneously. The presenter also has the option to silhouette their video in front of the presentation, display it next to them or share it as a visual aid above their shoulder like a televised news report.

Google Creates Immersive Meetings

In September 2020, Google introduced the Google Meet Series One Hardware in partnership with Lenovo. The Google

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> Allison Braund-Harris, Hardly

Meet hardware was created with hybrid workplaces in mind to create immersive meetings. Features include an audio bar, smart camera, mic pod, computing system and remotes. The Smart Audio Bar integrates TrueVoice® which uses AI to remove background noise and focus on human voices. The Smart Camera also uses AI to automatically adjust to ensure all participants are in frame.

In early 2020, companies were forced to quickly shift to a remote environment. Employers and employees discovered the many benefits and new challenges of remote work. These challenges may heighten as organizations navigate hybrid work models without proper solutions. Technology is playing a critical role in supporting new ways of working and providing solutions to help employees stay productive, efficient and connected. ■