

Wendy Pfeiffer

One of the contexts that our employees are living in now is home. And home is the ultimate individual consumer environment.

Jason Lopez

Wendy Pfeiffer is the CIO of Nutanix. In this podcast series on the shift to hybrid work at the company, she talks about bringing the consumer experience into the workplace.

Wendy Pfeiffer

At home I got to pick my desk and my chair and my lighting and my pink color on my walls. My alarm clock wakes me up at a certain time and I drink the brand of coffee I want. I am speaking to you while looking into the display of my gaming computer because it's a great display. Would you ever choose non 4K video if you had the choice of 4K video? I'm embracing the consumer tool. I have a USB microphone that comes from a not enterprise IT context. Let's think about this a little bit.

[music]

Jason Lopez

Digital has democratized many things. For example, 25 years ago, if you wanted to write music for an orchestra and record it on your own dime, it would cost you tens of thousands, perhaps more than a hundred grand, to rent a studio, hire 80 musicians, the audio engineers and the producer, and pay for music mastering. But with today's apps you have access to astonishing music sampling of the BBC Symphony for 299 dollars. Wendy has a similar take on the apps her team has standardized on.

Wendy Pfeiffer

I used to have to pay either Cisco or Crestron or Zoom a hundred thousand dollars a conference room illustratively in order to have a camera and microphones in there connected to the computer. That's enterprise conference room technology. Now as one of our principles and enabling hybrid, first, we've brought a consumer tech device into our physical conference rooms. It's from a company called Owl Labs, o-w-l Labs, and it's called an owl. It's called an owl because it looks like an owl. It's got an 18 foot range in all directions. And we've just put one of those in our board room because our board of directors was having issues using all the expensive devices in the room to enable hybrid board meetings. This thing costs \$900 and the audio and the video integrates seamlessly with Zoom. So I don't have to set up a device, I don't have to turn on the camera, I don't need to go find the HDMI cable. I didn't have to do anything at all. Just works in the room. Data isn't stored anywhere. Super cool, super integrated, not expensive. Latest technology, very, very clear. Audio and video. Kodak, just a microphone. And some cameras on a device comes from the sports camera space. I used to work at GoPro. It's just a gadget. But this gadget is enabling hybrid meetings for 1% of the price of the typical meeting room setup. We're doing that everywhere we can because frankly, the consumer tech is more performant and more cost effective than the enterprise tech. Same with tools for curating personal presence.

Jason Lopez

Here, Wendy is talking about what you look like on video in a Zoom meeting, what your background looks like. It borders on meta-version in that there are consumer tools for augmenting what you present on screen

Wendy Pfeiffer

If I know that I'm not going to show up on the wavy, crappy video with my face in the dark and people not able to see me, like maybe I won't spend three out of the eight hours tomorrow that I've allocated for work to drive to. And from a location, maybe I'll show via Zoom and give three more hours to the company for other tasks. There's this technology, if you've ever used Snapchat, very consumer app where like I can take a photo of myself, but I can enable all these filters, so I'll look funnier, whatever, or like way better that technology's now available in Zoom. So I can click on the setup icon and I can choose touch up my appearance and I have all kinds of options. I can appear like I'm wearing makeup, I can change the lighting. I can have my face look thinner. I can change even my background, my skin tone, et cetera. And so that I'm able to curate my experience.

Jason Lopez

These features on Zoom fall under categories like Since the features have been available on Zoom, Wendy has gotten a lot employee feedback.

I can't tell you how much feedback we get from employees on this. How I feel much more comfortable. I feel better in these meetings with prospects when I'm selling that ability to curate how I show up. That principle is in consumer tech everywhere. It's in Discord. I build my reputation differently there. It's on my mobile phone, it's in technologies like Zoom. I just had a conversation with Eric, the CEO of Zoom, and he said that's their most popular, most enabled feature is that.

[music]

Wendy Pfeiffer

We just lost our minds virtually. And that's the only place we want to curate how we show up. No, think about how you dress to go into the office. You make sure that you, I don't know, shine your shoes. You, you know, I wear a longer jacket, so like my, my fat butt doesn't show, you know, I put a little extra makeup on, I do my hair. Like all of that is like you, you're already doing that. But we give people the, the ability to do that everywhere.

Jason Lopez

Wendy Pfeiffer is the CIO of Nutanix. In this brief series on hybrid work: the initiative by Nutanix IT on the future of how IT teams work. This is the Tech Barometer podcast, produced by The Forecast. Look us up for more in this series with Wendy at theforecastbynutanix.com.