zoom

# When collaboration grows, so does the operational burden





Most IT teams didn't set out to build a complex collaboration environment. They added a meeting tool, then a messaging platform, then a phone system, then an AI layer, each one solving a real problem at the time. The complexity wasn't a decision. It was an accumulation.

Now those tools have to work together. Policies have to stay consistent across all of them. Integrations have to hold up when platforms update independently. AI capabilities have to be governed before someone asks a hard question about data access. And through all of it, employees expect a seamless experience that doesn't require them to think about the infrastructure underneath.

That's a lot to manage. And for most IT teams, the operational work has grown faster than the headcount available to handle it.

This guide covers practical ways to reduce that burden without giving up flexibility or the employee experience you've worked to build.


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# The five places complexity tends to pile up

Not all management overhead is created equal. Some of it is unavoidable, just the cost of running a modern collaboration environment. But a lot of it comes from specific pressure points that compound over time. Here's where it usually starts.

## Policy consistency

When collaboration spans multiple platforms, applying uniform security and compliance policies gets harder. Each platform has its own admin interface, its own settings, its own update cadence. Keeping policies aligned across all of them takes active effort, and gaps appear quietly, not all at once.

## Integration maintenance

Third-party connections are only as reliable as the platforms on either end. When one platform updates, integrations break in ways that users notice before IT does. The maintenance work wasn't budgeted for, but it shows up anyway.

## AI governance

Every new AI capability introduces questions that didn't exist before: which tools are accessing company data, how responses are generated, what's being retained. Most organizations are adding AI faster than they're building the governance structures to support it. That gap creates risk that's hard to see until something goes wrong.

## User support and adoption

When the collaboration experience feels disconnected, employees find workarounds. Those workarounds become shadow IT. Shadow IT becomes a support burden. The cycle is predictable, but it's hard to break without addressing the underlying friction.

## Administrative visibility

Managing a collaboration environment you can't fully see is genuinely difficult. When usage data, policy status, and integration health live in separate dashboards, it's hard to know where problems are developing or where to focus improvement efforts.


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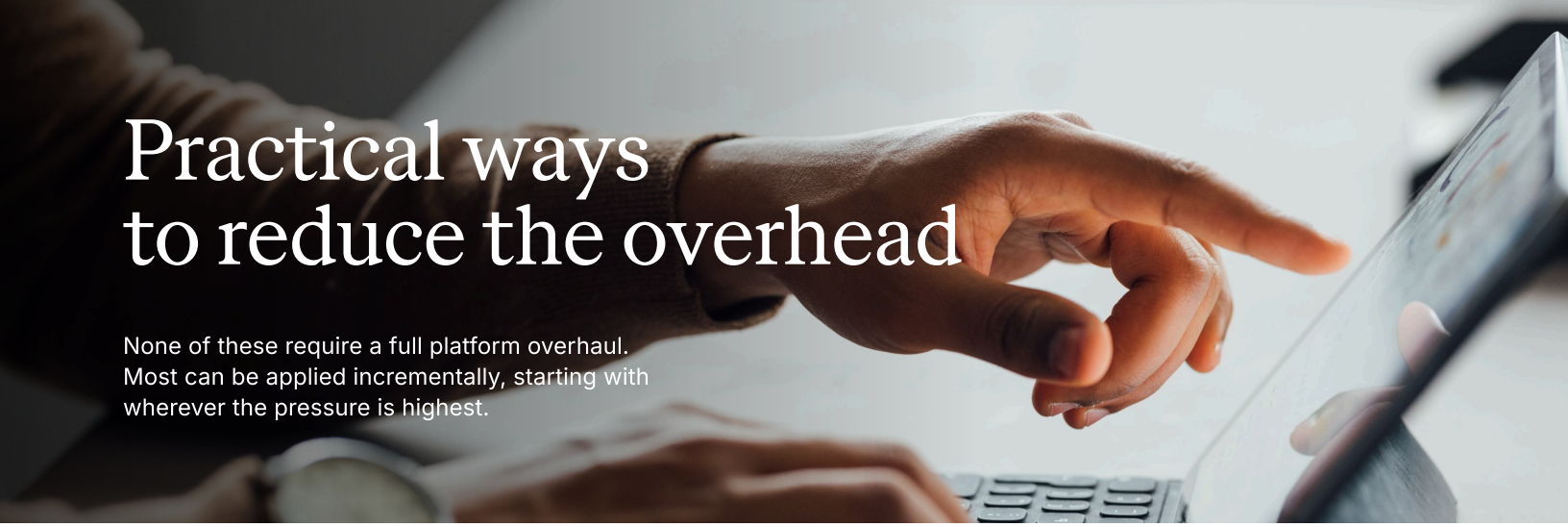

# Practical ways to reduce the overhead

None of these require a full platform overhaul. Most can be applied incrementally, starting with wherever the pressure is highest.

- **Consolidate admin surfaces where you can.** Every additional dashboard is another place to check, another interface to learn, another source of truth to reconcile. Where platforms offer unified administration across communication, AI, and workflows, that's worth prioritizing. Fewer admin surfaces means fewer places for things to fall through.

- **Define AI governance before you expand AI capabilities.** It's easier to build governance structures when the scope is still manageable. Waiting until AI is deeply embedded across the organization makes it significantly harder to apply consistent policies. Start with the basics: which tools can access what data, how long data is retained, and who has administrative oversight.

- **Set integration standards before adding new tools.** Not every integration needs to be custom-built, but every integration should meet a baseline: documented, tested, and maintained by someone with clear ownership. When new tools are evaluated, integration reliability should be part of the criteria, not an afterthought.

- **Use adoption data to find friction before it becomes a support ticket.** Low adoption in a specific team or workflow is usually a signal, not a coincidence. Something about the experience isn't working. Identifying those patterns early, through usage data rather than support volume, lets IT address friction before it drives people toward workarounds.

- **Prioritize platforms that reduce management surface area over time.** Some platforms are designed to grow with you. Others add complexity with every new capability. The difference shows up in how administration scales: whether adding a new feature means a new dashboard, a new policy set, and a new integration to maintain, or whether it fits into what's already there.


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# What a more manageable environment looks like

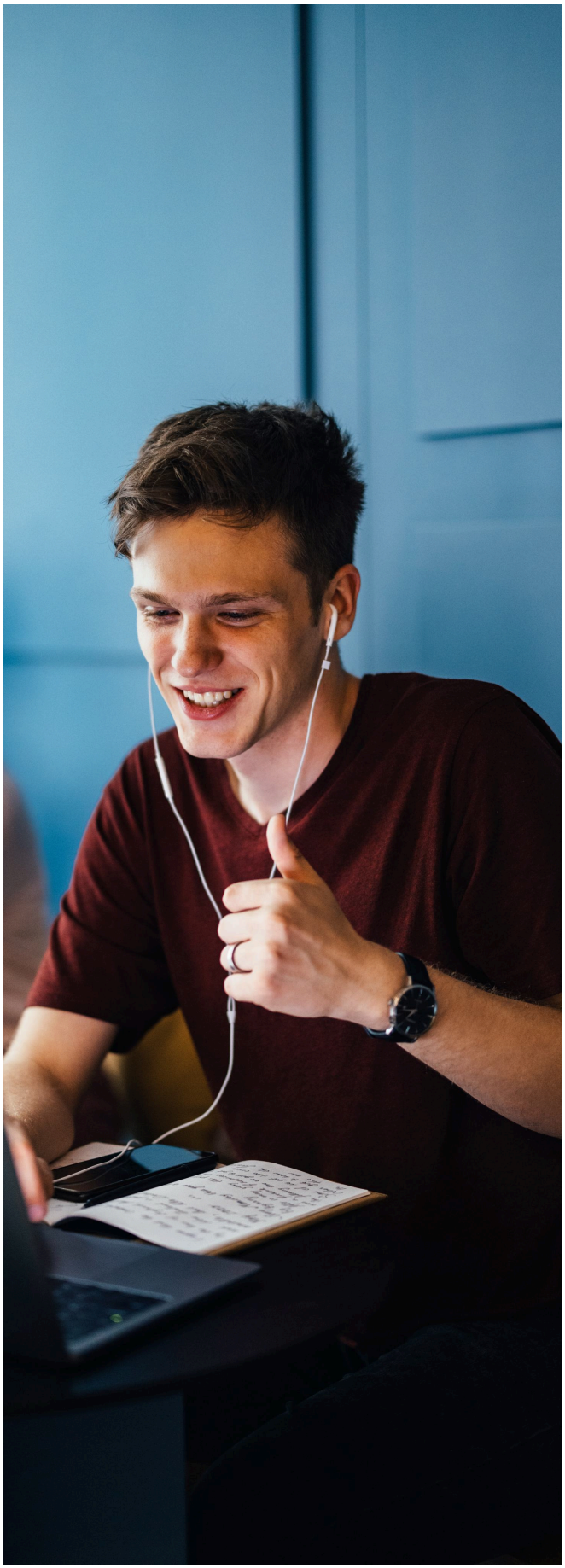
When operational overhead is under control, IT teams spend less time firefighting and more time on work that actually moves the business forward. Policies are consistent because they're managed from fewer places. Employees experience fewer friction points, which reduces the shadow IT risk that creates support burden downstream. AI is adopted with confidence because governance is already in place.

**That's the environment worth building toward. And the platform underneath it matters.**

Zoom Workplace brings meetings, chat, phone, AI, docs, and workflows together in a single platform, while enabling connections to many tools your organization already depends on. A centralized admin portal covers user provisioning, phone number assignment, usage analytics, and AI feature management. For organizations evaluating what a more manageable collaboration environment could look like, the Work Better Buyer's Guide goes deeper on platform value, total cost of ownership, and how Zoom fits into the systems you already run.

## Learn more about simplifying collaboration management

Get the details →

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Thank you