Ten Things to Consider Before You Invest in Video Conferencing

Communicate with Anyone, Anywhere

Video conferencing has long been thought of as the technology for the other half, something to be used by the bigger guys, the ones handling mergers and acquisitions and the like—not something that the average business could afford or make use of. In the last few years, however, a series of technological advances have changed that notion, making video conferencing not only a viable technology for businesses of any size but a necessity.

1. BUSINESS PROCESSES

How could your business benefit from video conferencing? Consider today's work flow and how video can influence it to expedite decision making, communicate with more people, keep employees engaged, train disparate teams, and keep in closer contact with your supply chain, customers, partners and suppliers. Think of the benefits to remote or mobile users who need to collaborate on the go and the multiple uses you could derive from recording and streaming meetings and content.

2. COMPATIBILITY

Ensure that you can actually connect with the people you need to by looking for a video conferencing solution that is standards-based, not a walled-garden solution. You'll also want to be able to talk to as broad a range of devices as possible. That means desktops, laptops, tablets and mobile devices alike. Keep it simple. Maybe you can't outfit the whole organization with video conferencing on every device, so think about what matters most and start there. Make sure the costs of your initial investment in video conferencing are low so you can scale up as you need to.

3. COSTS

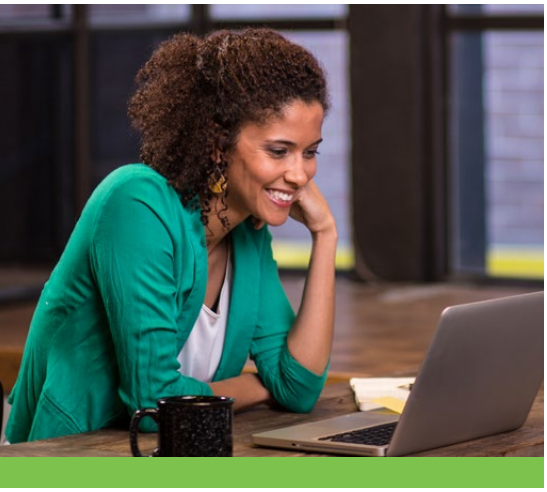
Invest in technology that won't become obsolete as your needs change or your organization grows. Also, the cost of a dedicated Internet connection can be very high and is rarely justified as raw Internet is often good enough. Travel costs matter but should not be of primary importance. Don't look to justify your spending on technology this way. Invest in it because you believe in it. Don't forget—video allows face-to-face communications instantly, so also consider the opportunity cost in waiting to have those meetings.

4. YOUR IT DEPARTMENT

Consider how video technology will affect IT processes, business continuity issues and the effect of running video traffic on the network. Vet existing providers on video conferencing experience. Discuss with your IT team how many smaller video-equipped rooms would be more effective than a smaller number of expensive boardrooms. Trial before purchasing to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the technology and that your IT department understands and is committed to deploying. A successful implementation vitally depends on IT involvement, so make them your video conferencing champions.

5. QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

For video conferencing to be successful within your business, the quality needs to be so high that you forget you are using it, the technology simply becomes invisible. Remember, video is supposed to be a truly immersive experience, and this will be hard to achieve if you deploy small or non-HD screens in your meeting rooms. The bottom line is, don't skimp on quality at the expense of the video experience.



6. VIDEO CONFERENCING VERSUS WEB CONFERENCING

The main difference between video conferencing and web conferencing is quality. Apples to apples it is not. Web conferencing is like a slightly better phone call whereas video conferencing is like looking through a window to another place. True HD video gives you the feeling of being there without having to physically get there. Web conferencing simply cannot match this experience.

7. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

So what's next for video communication? 4K displays will make the quality of experience even higher than is currently achievable, but it's the promise to empower anyone with a suitable web browser to get involved in the video communications world that makes WebRTC the next "big thing." This technology will dramatically increase the number of possible video participants to further fulfill the promise of ubiquitous video communications adoption. It will have dynamic, far-reaching consequences in environments where large numbers of occasional users are involved. However, infrastructure technology will be required to support this, meaning WebRTC will augment video communications rather than replace it.

> "What Lifesize is trying to do is differentiate from other video conference providers by first providing users flexibility in purchasing and use, and second highlighting how competitors force the purchase of 'shelfware' in unused applications in many one-size-fits-all packages."
>
> – Larry Walsh, Channelnomics, January 2012, Lifesize Introduces Flexible Video Conferencing

8. EVANGELIZING VIDEO CONFERENCING

Installing video conferencing into a business and expecting the organization to adopt it and change its behavior is simply not realistic. For truly successful implementation, a number of strategies can be employed to help fuel adoption.

1. Let potential users know it exists.
2. Conduct training (live or on-demand) showing how easy it is to use.
3. Understand that people will be afraid to use it, even if they don't tell you they are.
4. Find corporate business sponsors (we suggest you start with the executive floor).
5. Investigate to find out who in your supply chain has video and use it with them.
6. Incentivize your team with "video miles" or cool prizes for adopting the technology.

> "Lifesize is pushing video closer to ubiquitous adoption by making it easily accessible to anyone, anywhere."
>
> – Roopam Jain, Frost & Sullivan, July 2011. Lifesize Connections Merges Simplicity & Performance by Bringing HD Video Conferencing to the Cloud

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9. LINKING VIDEO CONFERENCING TO OTHER TECHNOLOGY

Video conferencing can be, and often is, used as a stand-alone solution. However, there are a variety of ways and advantages to creating a real Unified Communications environment by linking to other technologies, such as:

- Your IP telephony environment
- Microsoft® Lync®
- Whiteboarding
- Room control environments such as AMX®, Crestron® and Harmony®

We recommend starting off slowly. Prove that the video conferencing technology works, understand the effect on your business process and then decide on how or what to link together. For mass adoption, simplicity and ubiquity are vital. Keep initial costs down by not integrating everything together right away, and instead spend your budget on more locations to communicate with and keep the whole solution simple.

10. FIND A TRUSTED ADVISOR

Look for manufacturers who have proven themselves to be innovators and committed to the market, trusted advisors who understand and already manage other IT functions. You don't want to invest in the overnight sensation that will be gone tomorrow. Make sure you interview potential advisors thoroughly; check that they know what they are talking about. Video conferencing is NOT an AV product. In the modern era, the network and infrastructure issues require expertise in more than lighting or room decoration. Finally, look for a supplier you are likely to be able to understand and who will understand your business.

> "To put it simply, Lifesize allows us to maximize what good people can do by removing two barriers—distance and time. One day, picking up a video call will be as ubiquitous as picking up a telephone, and we are excited to be moving in that direction."
>
> – Larry Eisenberg, Executive Director of Facilities Planning & Development, Los Angeles Community College District

SEEING IS BELIEVING—EXPLORE VIDEO CONFERENCING

We hope that you found our list of ten things to consider before you invest in video conferencing helpful, and because we know that seeing is believing, we would be delighted to arrange an opportunity for you to experience the power of video for yourself.

For more information or to request your personal demonstration, visit us at: www.Lifesize.com/demo

HEADQUARTERS
Austin, Texas, USA
+1 512 347 9300
Toll Free US +1 877 543 3749

EMEA REGIONAL OFFICE
Munich, Germany
+49 89 20 70 76 0
Toll Free Europe +00 8000 999 09 799

APAC REGIONAL OFFICE
Singapore
+65 6303 8370

www.lifesize.com
E-mail: info@lifesize.com

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