

Q&A with Silicon Labs

An inside glimpse into what makes Silicon Labs a pioneer in semiconductor production.



Silicon Labs (NASDAQ: SLAB) is a team of hardware and software innovators dedicated to solving their customer's toughest embedded design challenges. For nearly 20 years, they have created the silicon, software and tools that enable the world's leading engineers to create products that disrupt industries and change the world. They're headquartered in Austin and have 13 remote sites globally. Behind the scenes, IT Director Shane Dickinson is responsible for ensuring that employees are able to collaborate and deliver on Silicon Labs' mission.

Silicon Labs is in a very competitive market. What sets the company apart?

Our key differentiators are our broad IP portfolio, high-value products and ability to execute. Silicon Labs is pioneering the definition of the Internet of Things (IoT), with chipsets developed for Nest® and other IoT devices. The company also supports mesh networking and communications for IoT devices, including Wi-Fi, ZigBee® and Bluetooth®. Silicon Labs is known for its broad portfolio of IP, its dedication to bringing high quality products to market and defining what the IoT environment looks like.

What's behind Silicon Labs' thought leadership in the Internet of Things?

It's our focus on collaboration. Silicon Labs has a global environment with centralized tools and design in Austin, which sets the stage for collaboration. Refining ideas, however, is all about communication and interaction. Our design teams around the world—Sunnyvale, Boston, Budapest, Oslo, China, Singapore—need to be able to communicate and collaborate. We wanted to get these remote teams to interact as if they were in one location.

In internal surveys, people were saying it's hard to communicate between faraway offices, like Singapore and Austin, because of the time difference. That means someone has to stay in the office until after hours to participate in a team call, which isn't sustainable or convenient for the employee.

What was your approach to this issue?

To better enhance our design and R&D collaboration, we tried a Lifesize competitor a year and a half ago, and after 12 months, there were only 60 users. Adoption was underwhelming, and it didn't solve our problems. We reevaluated our approach to accommodate simplicity and interoperability and brought on Lifesize—its in-room systems, mobile clients and cloud service—a few weeks ago.

“It’s been revolutionary: within just weeks after launch, we already had over 200 users created. It’s taken off, and it’s taken off quick.”

Experience the power of Lifesize video conferencing for yourself. See what it’s like to meet over video with anyone, whenever, wherever and on any device. **Start a Free Trial**



With all the video options on the market, why did you switch to Lifesize Cloud?

Lifesize Cloud is simple from an end-user perspective, and it’s simple for administrators. From deploying the room systems out to the remote sites and the subscription service into the cloud for the employees, it’s very easy. Lifesize sends auto-updates to all systems that are connected to the cloud, so we don’t have to remote in to all the boxes to update them. Plus, the clients are auto-updated as well. It’s all very easy to use and configure from an administrative perspective. That’s huge.

Have you seen any changes?

It’s been revolutionary: within just weeks after launch, we already had over 200 users created. It’s taken off, and it’s taken off quick. A solution like Lifesize Cloud makes it so easy for me to be at home—on a work machine, my personal machine or a mobile device—and I can participate and see people and content at the same time.

With the interoperability of Lifesize Cloud, you can connect with people outside the company too. It doesn’t matter what client someone’s using; I can send an invitation to anyone inside or outside the company, and I don’t have to worry about how they connect.

What advice do you have for others considering video conferencing?

It comes down to the company culture and the business problem you’re trying to solve. When the company’s not video-centric, audio and desktop sharing will suffice. When you’re a video-centric company, you can’t live without it.

In the last year, we acquired a company that was very video-centric: they required video for all meetings, so we adopted it too. Educating the end user has been key to our rapid adoption of Lifesize. The Lifesize Cloud client is so easy, you don’t need to put a lot of effort into training. Our sessions are 60 minutes, tops. I’ve had a lot of people say, “This is the greatest thing since sliced bread,” and they’re sounding the bugle, which accelerates adoption. Once people understand, “I can run on any smartphone/tablet as long as I have Internet connection; I can be so productive,” that’s when the light bulb comes on. They get on Lifesize Cloud, and they don’t look back.

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