



Video and Web-Based Collaboration: *Mimicking In-Person Meetings for a Virtual Workforce*

With so many key employees working from the road, home and/or satellite offices, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to get managers and executives together in person on a regular basis. Strategic meetings conducted via audio or desktop web and video conference do not convey the same level of importance or inclusivity as getting together in an executive boardroom. This is made even worse when two or three team members are calling from the same room and everyone else is dialing in remotely: the people in the room hold more weight and have more sway.

High-end video conferencing truly mimics the feeling of being in the same room—live and in the flesh—and eliminates these issues, making it possible for corporate leaders to get the business of business done with less travel and much more workplace flexibility. It also makes it cost-effective to invite partners and high-value clients into strategic meetings; opening up collaboration beyond the corporate walls is shown to result in better outcomes for the company and its clients.

Today's video conferencing creates an immersive experience that makes it feel as though participants are in the same room, even if they are continents apart. This can be accomplished by paying very close attention to everything from the room environment to the technology itself. A high-end, room-based video conferencing system can incorporate several large, high-definition video screens, positioned in such a way as to enable direct eye contact, making it automatic for meeting participants to interact in much the same way they would in person—rather than focusing on the camera, they are looking directly at the other attendees. Likewise, high-definition audio ensures everyone can clearly hear what is being said, even if they are seated far away from the audio conferencing bridge. And by making sure that every room with a video conferencing system has the same general set-up—that is, that the furniture, paint colors and lighting are identical across each site—companies mimic the look and feel of a single conference room.

Finally, by including web collaboration tools such as screen sharing, application sharing, mark-up capabilities and the like, companies can leverage video conferencing to actually get work done. And by enabling support for remote workers to dial in on their laptops, tablets and even smart phones, companies can ensure that everyone who needs to join in a meeting can do so, even if they don't get the full immersive experience.

This is extremely valuable for high-level strategic meetings among executives, who are often spread across the globe and who need to collaborate on critical issues in real time—without hopping on a plane every time they need to do so. It is also an excellent way to include key business partners and customers, which Frost & Sullivan research shows improves the overall customer experience, speeds time to market, and increases revenues.

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