

White Paper

Workflow Design

Making Video Collaboration Easy



The pressure is on. With new technology solutions hitting the market on a daily basis, CIOs and Tech leaders within every company are working harder than ever before to balance the desire to be cutting edge with the need to manage and secure enterprise technology. Employees, customers and business partners have become consumed with “Experience” as their metric for a sound business relationship and perhaps the largest measuring stick of a good experience is whether or not it is simple. As Leonardo De Vinci once said, “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

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Making Video Collaboration Easy

At the top of many technology leaders challenges is collaboration. Often thought of as a science, however, for CIOs and business leaders bringing together people across a vast number of tools to share, learn and engage both in real time and asynchronously is a massive challenge. In the end, if this can be accomplished to develop the simplistic experiences that users desire while creating technically secure environments, a collaboration utopia has been born; a place where technology and people meet to drive inspired business results.

Video collaboration has been widely available for over three decades, yet it's never been used to its full potential. Thanks to the collaborative power of the Internet, employees and customers have more control over their technology than ever before. Whether grabbing the newest productivity tool from the app store or simply swiping their credit card to consume a public cloud solution, centralized technology and IT decision-making has shifted quickly.

To make technology and people work in harmony, there has to be a certain amount of latitude while being considerate to

security and compliance needs. In the world of video and unified collaboration tools, these powerful forces of transformation are especially true.

As Millennials enter the workforce, companies are starting to rethink the way they do business. With options like telecommuting becoming increasingly common, businesses are no longer restricted to the brick-and-mortar sphere. **We connect globally, to achieve our business goals.** As a result, collaboration isn't just a necessity to keep in line with consumer and employee demand; it's the key to creating better business outcomes.

On the one hand, video technology can be a powerful connective tool. Employees already possess the capability to harness this technology based on their personal consumption. However, with the wide variety of video platforms available, collaboration faces new challenges. Today's options must be scalable and adaptable to many different forms. Leading the way are companies like Cisco and Microsoft with their Webex,



Spark and Skype for Business Platforms, which enable secure and hybrid cloud solutions for video collaboration, web conferencing and unified messaging and presence.

While all of this idealism is nice, the practical and perhaps more pragmatic side of technology leadership must consider just how difficult this change really is. From the complex network architecture required to deploy collaboration solutions to the highly difficult task of gaining adoption and buy-in from the employees, the road to a highly collaborative environment that embraces the power of video is a journey that starts with understanding the power of better communication, but is filled with both technology and people challenges that leadership must overcome.

In this paper we will further explore the value of more collaborative enterprises and what is truly possible when technology and people are enabled with a simpler, richer video experience.

A Rapid History of the Evolution of Video

If you have been around unified communication and video collaboration for a little while, then you probably remember what it was like just five to ten years ago. Video calls weren't ad-hoc, instead, they were an event. If you could make the call, connect with both audio and video you may have thought it was your lucky day. If you were trying to unify audio and video and do it from multiple locations on multiple devices you would need a team of technicians and a few weeks to make such a call take place.

Over the past few years the movement has been away from highly complex room based systems and infrastructure with decreasingly short shelf-life and instead collaboration has moved to mobile devices and desktop with the support of integrated applications and scalable cloud architecture.

"When you see the space doing what it was designed to do, with people collaborating at a high level, that's what's most rewarding for us as a company. AV technology will continue to be an ever-larger part of how we accomplish that."

Ryan Simonetti
Co-founder, Convene



This migration has democratized enterprise collaboration by making it easier to deploy organizationally, however, maximizing this potential comes down to understanding the pitfalls of modern collaboration and how organizations can overcome these challenges and apply collaboration as a business enabler.

Challenges of Deployment for Enterprises

Several challenges can arise once the decision has been made to adopt video collaboration.

Issues like interoperability, security, and compliancy are just a few of the challenges businesses may encounter regarding this form of communication.





Interoperability.

The multitude of platforms and devices can make it challenging for any enterprise to implement a video collaboration setup. Issues can arise from incorrect protocols, standards, frame rate support, and more. An enterprise starting fresh will have the advantage for now, as it will be some time before many established enterprises can smoothly transition to video conferencing.



Security.

Luckily, all video collaboration systems made within the last 10 years include 128-bit encryption, which according to an article written in the EE Times would take "...a supercomputer 1 billion billion years to crack..." The biggest danger enterprises will face are the employees themselves. Most security violations occur because employees either purposely or accidentally disregard security policies.



Compliance.

Healthcare will likely be effected by compliance issues the most, but other industries may face regulatory problems also. In addition to the environment on both sides of the camera, special care must be taken to ensure compliancy, which may include additional paperwork that both patients and care providers must fill out, additional knowledge the care provider must have regarding the technology they are using, additional training, etc.



Shadow IT.

More and more employees are independently making decisions to utilize different tools for productivity and this includes collaboration. With many off the shelf video communication tools available it is easily accessible for employees. However, this trend creates increased risk for compliance and security because the data isn't secure nor do most of these solutions comply with communications requirements of the FTC. In some industries like Healthcare this can be an even larger issue as there are strict guidelines on how data can be shared and communicated.

While these may not encompass all of the challenges that a particular organization faces when deploying collaboration solutions, it certainly does represent some of the largest challenges. The key to overcoming these challenges is to develop solutions that match the workflow demands of the workforce while making the entire collaboration experience as simple as possible to integrate into their daily life.



Aligning Workflow with Collaboration Strategy

When an organization starts thinking about Unified Communications and Collaboration solutions design, it is important that they start by first thinking about the workflow of those that will utilize the solutions.


- Who will be using the tools?
- When will they be using it?
- Where will people be when engaging the tools?
- Is it easy enough for them to adopt and more importantly embrace?

Sure, these may seem like a series of simple questions, but we all know that simple is often the most complex when it comes to technology.

When someone says they want it to be as simple as possible, that often means endless research, design and greater costs. However, with today's collaboration solutions it can be made simple, without adding the other challenges that are usually associated with simplicity.



For instance, if an employee receives an email with a request to join a video call later that day, they should be able to accept the meeting and then with a simple click in their calendar be able to



launch the video from their mobile, desktop or room based system. It shouldn't matter where they are or what device they are using.

Another example is when a chat turns into a group conversation that requires video and/or audio support. It should be a single button to add another user and a single button to launch a call. It really is that simple, but it does require a seamless design coupled with the right solutions to achieve this goal. One such solution we have found to meet this requirement is Cisco Spark, which can lead to more persistent virtual meeting rooms, reduction in email and better access to information.

Real Life Applications

Now, let's look at how workflow impacts functional roles within the organization. The benefits of video collaboration don't follow industry lines. Video has the capability to improve workflow and create better business results in virtually every field. Here are a few examples:

Sales.

The use of video collaboration in sales is still fairly new. Best practices are still being developed, but sales personnel who contributed to the report Telepresence and the Video Frontier pointed to a couple of central themes: (1) collaboration can improve remote sales; and (2) collaboration is an effective way to increase territory without hiring additional heads. As described, sales people are inherently mobile, giving them tools like Webex to create and join meetings from their mobile device; laptops and even video conferencing can enhance communications and provide a competitive advantage.

Workers also reported they could achieve several benefits, such as an evaluation of body language not available through phone communication and the ability to document, share, and improve asynchronous communication. According to the report, video-aided sales personnel moved an average of 20 percent of their contacts into the sales funnel.

Gone are the days when video collaboration was inaccessible to businesses. Previously, video was too expensive or difficult for most companies to use. Modern updates to video systems technology has made video user friendly, and the ubiquity of the technology makes it a cost-effective option, even for the smallest of businesses.

Marketing.

Marketers rarely think of video collaboration as a key in identifying metrics, yet it can be an essential way to improve business practices. A survey of marketing professionals that do use collaboration points to a number of key influences; namely, encouraging audience awareness for products and improving interactions with customers. Collaboration seems particularly helpful in a B2B setting, since immersion and education are twin pillars. Telepresence capabilities allow marketing professionals to create interactions with several people at one time. This can be especially helpful when developing campaigns where many stakeholders are involved.



Learning, research & development.

Video collaboration can be a powerful tool in education and training. With many companies and institutions still recovering from the economic downturn, onsite learning can be an economically challenging option. Additionally, businesses are eager to more flexibly meet the changing needs of the newest generation entering the workforce.

Companies who use video collaboration for training report a significant decrease in new employee costs. They also reported that video-enabling leads to higher workforce engagement. Those surveyed for Telepresence and the Video Frontier reported an average of a 7.7 percent reduction in employee turnover in 12 months.

Project management.

Business consulting firm Aberdeen studied 18 project managers who use video collaboration as a part of their daily business operations.

They identified two major influences on the adoption of video: (1) they needed to manage projects on a global scale; and (2) they required access to rare or remotely sourced skills to finish their projects. By using collaboration, managers shortened their timeline by five percent and their project total costs by eight percent.

In today's rapidly transforming workplace, the focus of collaboration tools must be about creating an experience that doesn't only satisfy users, but empowers them to be much more productive.

“To insure we are competitive in the programs we offer, we realized we needed to have an environment to make the technology work so that it didn't interfere with the learning. We wanted education, not the technology, front and center.”

**Dean Stephen Cavanaugh,
Dean, UMass Amherst School of Nursing**

The Future of Video and Collaboration is Experience

When your customers, partners and employees believe in the power of collaboration, they won't only use the tools, but they will embrace them in their daily work.

Virtually anyone who knows how to use a smart device can learn how to use other forms of video collaboration, transforming the way we do business. Today's market also provides an abundance of business video communication options, including click-to-join and wireless solutions.

Modern workflows demand that businesses be able to incorporate a vast number of connections on myriad devices. To maintain a competitive edge, companies will need to create a seamless experience for users.

Video collaboration isn't just simple to use, new solutions are connected to platforms, which mean your solution can be your voice, video, and interface for wired and wireless presentation.

With an increased focus on globalization and transparency, businesses are looking for ways to integrate their practices and strengthen strategic partnerships.

In the era of more connected people and workplaces we are always just an Internet connection away from collaborating face to face with anyone, anywhere in the world.

Adoption of video technology is one way to do this that's becoming mainstream, and enterprises will need to adapt if they want to stay competitive.

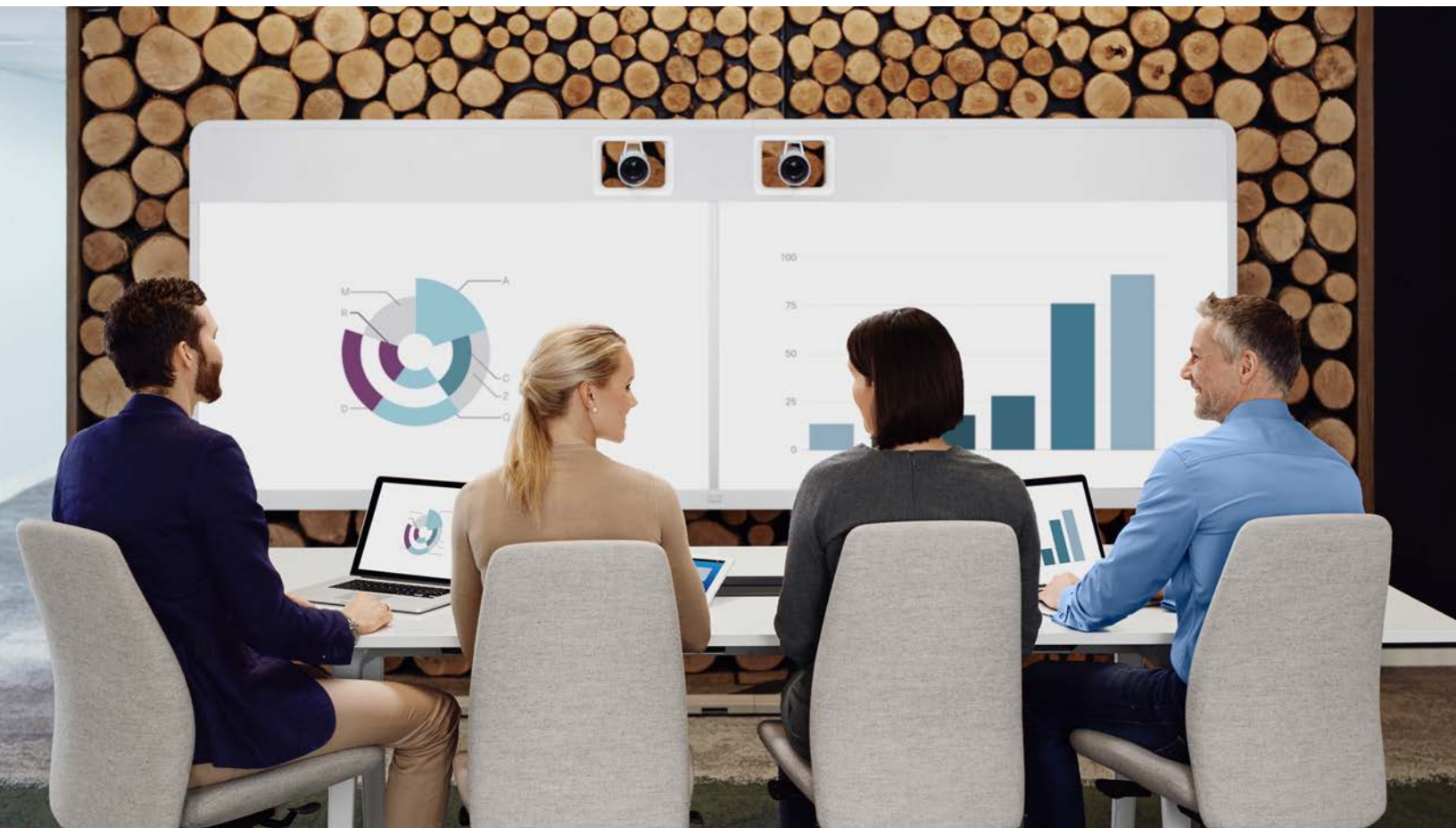
However, this is about more than interconnectivity. It is about understanding the goals and business objectives in order to use modern technologies to drive better outcomes for the enterprise.

Using a simplified workflow with Webex and Spark employees can use productivity tools like Outlook to schedule and join meetings from anywhere.

Even if meetings aren't scheduled these tools transform the way we communicate because they make high quality ad-hoc meetings not only possible, but also easy.

In the future it won't only be about the technology, but the experience that technology creates.

With simple mobile endpoint, one button calling and integrated room systems, the experience of video no longer needs to intimidate even the most novice user.



Change the Game with Cisco and HB Communications Solutions



WebEx

On-demand collaboration, online meeting, web conferencing and videoconferencing applications. <https://www.webex.com>

Cloud & Hybrid Collaboration

Work together to empower innovation and engagement. <http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collaboration/index.html>

Cisco Spark

Everything you need to work together, everywhere. <http://www.ciscospark.com>

Project Workplace

Build meeting scenarios, explore collaboration products and experiences. <https://projectworkplace.cisco.com>

VBrick Rev

Highly available, fault tolerant and massively scalable enterprise video. All in the cloud. <https://vbrick.com/rev>

Resources

<http://cisco.cioreview.com/cxoinsight/cisco-video-collaboration-transforms-business-operation-nid-4241-cid-61.html>

https://www.cisco.com/web/about/ac79/docs/pov/Video_Collaboration_IBSG.pdf

<http://hbcommunications.com/audio-visual/mobile/>

http://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/solutions/collateral/executive-perspectives/executive-perspectives/roi_of_video_collaboration.pdf

<http://social.cs.uiuc.edu/class/papers/p199-isaacs.pdf>

<http://searchunifiedcommunications.techtarget.com/feature/Video-conferencing-standards-and-interoperability-considerations>

<http://www.nojitter.com/post/240160666/keeping-video-conferencing-security-in-perspective-8230>

http://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589934956§ion=Key_Issues

