

ClearOne®



White Paper

DRIVING ADOPTION OF VIDEO CONFERENCING

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Introduction

Video conferencing was first introduced commercially in 1982. While the technology has existed for many years, there are still organizations who have not adopted video conferencing as a daily work tool. While other organizations have the technology, many users find it unreliable and difficult to use. For those organizations who have found video conferencing of value, the process they followed to drive adoption helped make video conferencing a necessary tool for successful business.

The purpose of this document is to identify what needs to be done to drive adoption of video conferencing so it becomes second nature to users and a technology deemed a necessity to business.

The Current Situation

Using video conferencing has the potential to increase productivity and efficiency by reducing unproductive travel time, preventing meeting delays, and providing faster exchange of information, thus allowing for greater reach of a message since individuals can obtain information when it is convenient for them. Video conferencing also allows for an increased number of participants. With video conferencing, all individuals who need information can get the information when it is easiest for them. Video calls can be real time, or calls can be recorded and viewed at a later time.

Users want video conferencing to be transparent and easy to use to allow them to conduct business. If video conferencing can help users be more strategic and competitive that is even better. Today many organizations have an installed base of video conferencing technology

that is not being used on a regular basis. Users complain the technology is difficult to use and does not always work.

How We Got This Way

When video conferencing was first commercially introduced in 1982 by CLI and NEC, as an industry we made the mistake of telling everyone that video conferencing looked like a television and sounded like a telephone.

As a result, users felt that a video conferencing system would last 20 years before needing replacement and calls would connect like telephone calls. Video conferencing systems are really computers that need software updating regularly and there are a variety of networks over which video works. Fortunately, we are now at a point in time when video conferencing has become ubiquitous and available on a variety of devices from group systems to desktop units to mobile tablets & phones. Now the question is how do you drive adoption of video conferencing on a variety of devices?

User Recommendations

TRI recently conducted a study of 100 end user organizations asking them for recommendations on what they do to successfully adopt video conferencing within their organizations. While their responses sound logical and intuitive, when further study was done to determine how well their recommendations were put into practice it was sad to see that many forget the obvious. Following are the recommendations made by these users:

Video Conferencing

- + Make it easy to use
- + Quantify cost savings
- + Provide training
- + Provide a user competency test
- + Pick up charges under general overhead to promote usage
- + Get senior management endorsement & usage
- + Make it part of the corporate culture that everyone be trained & required to use the technology

Given the suggestions presented above, the next obvious question is how do you get started?

Driving Adoption - Getting Started

The following advice is based on 30 years of consulting experience within the video conferencing industry. The recommendations offered are not magic and may seem very simple. What is amazing is the number of organizations who do not consider these suggestions when implementing video conferencing or decide to overlook these recommendations. Answering the following four questions will make your adoption of video conferencing easier and more worthwhile to your organization.

- + What is our benchmark for success?
- + Why are we implementing video conferencing?
- + What is video conferencing going to do for us?
- + What will be do with video conferencing once it is installed?

Recommendation 1: Determine Your Benchmark for Success

Generally, someone within an organization decides it is time to install video conferencing or upgrade what

already exists. Usually, that person approaches a telecom or computer person and asks them to implement the technology. Before any steps are taken to install video conferencing the following question should be posed of the person making the request: "What is your benchmark for success?" In other words, how will you know if you have accomplished your job? Too often no one bothers to ask this question. As a result, video conferencing is installed without any thought to who will use it and how it will impact the bottom line of the organization. Video conferencing is not a telephone. It is not always viewed as an intuitive technology everyone needs to use. Rather, it is more like those telephones with all the fancy features that no one understands how or why to use. It is time to make video conferencing a necessity. Not only must it be easy to use, but people need to know why they should bother using it at all. One way to start the adoption process is to establish a benchmark for success at the beginning.

Examples of benchmarks include:

- + Increasing communication with non-corporate sites by holding video conferences once a month
- + Getting a specific product to market more quickly using video conferencing to shorten the manufacturing cycle.
- + Training a large number of end users, who are scattered at multiple sites, in a shorter timeframe.



Determine your Videoconferencing benchmark for success

Recommendation 2: Assess Your Needs

Assess the needs of your organization. Doing so in a structured way allows you to:

- (a) select the right technology to meet specific user needs,
- (b) identify individuals who will champion the project because they have a need,
- (c) cost justify the project, and
- (d) provide data for growth in all areas of conferencing.

Many people, especially those selling equipment, shy away from conducting a needs assessment. They wrongly believe that the process takes a long time, costs too much, and may convince you to buy someone else's equipment. In reality, a needs assessment can be accomplished, on average, in a 2-4 week period. The value of the data in selecting the right technology and ensuring its usage far outweighs the cost to the user and the vendor. In fact, in many instances those who conduct a needs assessment are better prepared to purchase more equipment in a shorter timeframe than those who did not conduct a needs assessment.

A needs assessment also helps you uncover unique applications for the use of video conferencing (i.e. using video conferencing for review of legal documents, interviews for potential employees prior to having them fly in for a meeting, marketing campaign for a new product, etc.).

Recommendation 3: Return On Investment (ROI)

Understanding the value obtained by implementing video conferencing helps management understand why video conferencing should be viewed as a necessity, not just a nicety. While many view the benefits of video conferencing to be measured with soft dollars, in reality those who have identified useful applications have had no trouble developing a return on investment to justify both

their initial capital expenditures and their ongoing recurring costs. By calculating a return on investment it is easier for management to see the value of video conferencing and, thus, understand the need to continue growing the usage of the technology. Without understanding this value what often happens is that when one champion of the technology departs another is not easy to find. Types of return on investment calculations for video conferencing include travel cost savings, increased productivity, and time efficiency. As an example, one company found they achieved a return on their investment after only 67 days because they paid for their equipment by not traveling. Another company increased productivity to enable them to get a product to market three months sooner, thus saving millions of dollars.



A variety of video applications for office and remote use will ensure successful adoption

Recommendation 4: Applications Development

To ensure successful, ongoing usage of video conferencing technologies it is important to have a variety of applications in mind and others waiting to be tried. In addition to wanting to find champions for the systems it is important to develop and report on applications for video conferencing so others learn and can generate their own uses for video conferencing. As mentioned by the 100 firms interviewed, writing case study experiences and sharing them with others is key to ongoing success with these technologies.

Summary

The future for video conferencing is bright. Dynamic changes in the global communications environment – decreasing network and equipment costs and the need for businesses to compete in a global economy – continue to propel the adoption of video conferencing at a rapid rate. It will be important for organizations to develop a plan to efficiently and effectively adopt video conferencing and ensure successful and ongoing usage. This can be done through attention to detail including establishing a benchmark, assessing your needs, determining a realistic return on investment, and developing a variety of applications.

Keep in mind that you can always consider hiring someone else to assist you with your efforts (i.e. assess your organization, develop applications, and manage your network). This way your IT department can oversee what is done and you can concentrate on your core business. Users need to get the benefit of quality technology that works flawlessly, is easy for them to use, and designed to meet their ongoing needs.

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