How the World Defies Distance

Insights from 5,000 Business Professionals on How They Overcame Remote Collaboration Challenges
Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of the book *Silent Messages – Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes*, conducted several studies on nonverbal communication. He found that 7% of any message is conveyed through words, 38% through certain vocal elements (tonality), and 55% through nonverbal elements (facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc).

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Survey Methodology

In late 2013, Polycom commissioned independent consultants, APMG Research, to analyze data from a global online survey completed by 5,000 business professionals who contributed with their remote collaboration challenges.

The survey was open to professionals interested in the topic, in all fields of industry and business functions.

The goal was to understand the challenges faced by respondents, not just in communicating with each other, but also collaborating effectively with internal and external parties. The survey also gathered feedback on what communication tools they use to overcome these challenges.

Overcoming the World’s Remote Collaboration Challenges

In late 2013, Polycom invited more than 5,000 business professionals from around the globe to participate in an online survey about their unique collaboration challenges.

The workplace is continuing to evolve and communication technology is playing a major role in driving this transformation. Forward thinking organizations are no longer constrained by office or country location.

The survey found that respondents believe video conferencing has become one of the most effective technologies in the world for enabling face-to-face or human collaboration in real time. Video conferencing is enabling people across business functions, geographies and vertical markets to defy distance.

Using video collaboration solutions to defy distance can lead to substantial savings incurred by travel costs, but that is just the beginning of the value proposition; video collaboration is simply essential today to keep large distributed organizations operating with a high degree of efficiency and contributing to improving work-life balance.

Globally, business professionals are experiencing productivity gains every day as they continue to explore new ways of using video collaboration. The more often people use video technology to collaborate, the more positive they are about its effectiveness.

However, still more needs to be done globally to ensure everyone enjoys the same consistent standards of collaboration, not restricted by bandwidth speeds, as poor quality of audio and video still ranks as the number one remote collaboration challenge.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this survey – your feedback has been hugely valuable and we hope you in turn find this survey report valuable.
Top Ten Remote Collaboration Challenges

Distance-defying collaboration starts with understanding its challenges. When considering challenges around remote collaboration, the biggest difficulty respondents felt they faced was poor quality of audio and/or video. They also experienced challenges around sharing content and ensuring the full participation of everyone in the meeting.

1. Poor audio/video quality
   The biggest challenge to successful video collaboration for almost 39% of respondents is poor audio/video quality.
   **TIP:** Choose a partner who can deliver enterprise-grade, secure voice, video and content-sharing solutions across any environment with a superior user experience.

2. Sharing content
   Close to 35% of respondents find it hard to share content with others in a remote meeting, much less find a way to collaborate over it.
   **TIP:** With the right video conferencing solution, you can see all the participants clearly, plus share content with them anytime, anywhere – all in real time.

3. Full participation
   More than 30% of all respondents feel it’s difficult to fully participate in a meeting from a remote location.
   **TIP:** Video collaboration features eye contact and non-verbal cues, encouraging everyone to collaborate and contribute as if they are in the same room.

4. Getting everyone in front of the whiteboard
   More than 30% of people find it hard to bring real-time collaboration to a meeting with remote colleagues.
   **TIP:** Choose a video collaboration solution that allows everyone in your meeting to brainstorm and notate directly on your content in real-time.

5. Being a good host
   Almost 30% of people hosting a meeting find it difficult to get everyone to participate from multiple locations.
   **TIP:** Full participation is easier when you use video collaboration and content sharing technology that lets you see everyone you’ve invited to a meeting while also viewing and annotating on the content.

6. Background noise
   27% of people have had video conferences disrupted by distracting background noise.
   **TIP:** Mute your microphone when you are not talking on a video conference – and avoid high traffic areas to minimize background noise.

7. Unreliable technology
   More than 25% of respondents cite unreliable technology as a major challenge to reliable collaboration from multiple locations.
   **TIP:** When choosing a video collaboration partner, look for a track record delivering solutions that have redundancy and work the first time and every time after.

8. Short attention spans
   Nearly 24% of respondents feel colleagues who don’t pay attention hamper their remote collaboration efforts.
   **TIP:** With everyone on camera and viewing content instead of just on a call, people are more engaged, more focused and spend less time multi-tasking.

9. Fear of change
   Nearly 23% of people say their desire to collaborate more freely is inhibited by a business culture resistant to change or new technology adoption.
   **TIP:** Make sure your video collaboration solution includes adoption services – and create a supportive environment by getting the leadership team using it first.

10. Did someone say globalization?
    16% of respondents have difficulty scheduling meetings across time zones.
    **TIP:** An easy to deploy, easy to use video collaboration and content sharing solution allows your people to collaborate or view recordings anytime, anywhere.

#DefyDistance
Key Insights from the Survey

Business understands the power of video collaboration to defy distance and deliver business objectives and goals

1. **Real Time Collaboration with video conferencing proves effective for remote collaboration.**

   The ability to see participants or information being shared in real time is a key success factor for remote collaboration.

   The most effective technologies for remote collaboration are web conferencing (27%) followed closely by video conferencing (25%). Instant messaging is believed to be the least effective (12%).

2. **Poor audio or video identified as the number one barrier to remote collaboration.**

   The key barriers to successful remote collaboration were:
   - Poor quality of audio and/ or video (28%)
   - Difficulties with sharing content (25%)
   - Remote participant engagement (23%)
   - Difficulty to whiteboard (22%)

   Frequent video conferencing users quickly become accustomed to its ease of use and acknowledge the benefits of face-to-face real time collaboration in their meetings.

3. **The more video meetings attended the more positive participants are about the benefits of video.**

   Approximately 36% of respondents, who spend less than 5 hours in meetings each week, feel that video conferencing greatly helps them in their jobs. However, for those spending more than 30 hours in meetings each week, 57% feel that video conferencing greatly helps them.

   The more hours spent in meetings the greater the benefit from video conferencing.

More than 85% of respondents across all business functions and at all levels within an organization believe video conferencing is effective at helping achieve business objectives and goals. CEOs have an even stronger opinion here with 88% stating that video collaboration is key in helping meet their objectives for their organizations.
4. While attitudes towards video conferencing were extremely positive, 27% of companies were still using conference calls as their main method of collaboration.

This suggests that while respondents understand the benefits of video conferencing, they may be working in organizations that are resistant to change or new technology adoption, perhaps at the expense of efficiency and clear visual communication.

5. On balance, the world agrees that video conferencing is more effective than other modes of remote communication.

Every region agreed that video conferencing was more effective than a conference call with the exception of Africa, whose respondents stated the effectiveness of video conferencing and conference calls had equal effectiveness.

6. The effectiveness of video collaboration ranks highly among many business functions.

93% of those working in sales and marketing see great advantages of using video conferencing to help them achieve their business objectives and goals.

Teachers and lawyers acknowledge the advantages of video conferencing with 93% of respondents working in these professions stating that video conferencing assists in achieving their goals.

Healthcare professionals followed closely behind with 91% stating its effectiveness.

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Key Insights from The Survey (cont.)

From Creating Culture Change to Redefining the Customer Experience

It’s true. Amazing things happen when you use video collaboration to defy distance.

We asked a number of business functions about their business challenges and whether video is helping solve them.

The findings showed, overwhelmingly, that organizations believe in the power of video conferencing and human collaboration to defy distance and enable them to improve business performance.

Survey respondents state the power of video conferencing greatly improves face-to-face collaboration, company productivity, the time taken to make business decisions and ultimately generates cost savings by being able to conduct business in real time.

We asked survey respondents to share the challenges they face, not just in communicating with each other, but also collaborating effectively with internal and external parties.

The survey results in the following pages provide feedback across business functions on the effectiveness of video collaboration, from CEO’s to sales leaders.
88% of CEOs believe video conferencing helps drive their business with more than half of these saying it greatly helps.

**CEOs Appreciate the Business Value and Competitive Benefits of Video Collaboration**

Today, CEOs and their organizations face challenges that are all at once unprecedented, unpredictable, and unknown.

Overwhelmingly, our research shows that CEOs appreciate the advantages and competitive benefits of video collaboration. They understand the business value and its ability to save them time and money while improving operating efficiencies.

Integrating people, process and technology to enable organizational transformation is no longer enough. Human collaboration must be added to the mix because it sparks innovation which is the enabler to competitive advantage in both developing and knowledge-based economies.

Video technology is aiding CEOs to improve collaboration with employees and customers by helping them put the human touch back into their business communication.

“It speeds up the decision making process. It is far more collaborative in communication where individuals can act and react, drawing on interaction between one another”

CEOs believe that video is helping their organization, enabling people to see each other more regularly, put faces to names and collaborate more efficiently on shared projects.

The end result? Stronger relationships, improved productivity and faster decision making.

For the majority of CEOs with access to video, it has become C-Suite essential with 88% believing in the power of video collaboration to get the job done.

*Comments quoted by survey respondents have not been attributed to respect the anonymity of the contributor.*

Additional Resources:
• Lonza Customer Case Study
• www.polycom.com/ceo
83% of IT professionals state video conferencing is helpful.

IT Professionals are More Informed than Most in Understanding the Benefits of Video Collaboration

CIOs have transformed from being mere improvers or a support function. Today they are change agents, corporate strategists and talent magnets. They devise systems that connect the business to customers, R&D networks that link talent worldwide and data tracking that guides complex supply chains.

It’s no secret that the buck stops with IT when it comes to the smooth running of technology in the workplace. Not surprisingly, our research found that IT professionals are more informed than most in understanding the benefits video collaboration delivers to an organization. These include reducing travel, saving money and delivering more effective meetings.

Some uninitiated IT professionals believe that introducing new video technology also means a portfolio expansion of their role as Chief Trouble Shooting Officer inside their organization, and are naturally wary of the potential for increased workloads.

However, for IT experts taking the lead role to video-enable their organizations, the pay-offs have been worth it. Greatly improved collaboration, productivity gains and improved relationships are just some of the benefits realized throughout the organization including their own IT departments.

"I have a globally dispersed staff and the use of these technologies allows me to be more impactful with my team and in turn allow them the quality face time with me to assist with their professional development."

Video collaboration is transforming underappreciated IT troubleshooters into IT cyber-heroes as they play a valuable role in helping organizations work smarter and faster.

83% of IT professionals stated that video collaboration was helpful and experiencing the positive benefits of a connected environment.

Additional Resources:
• Buro Happold Customer Case Study
• Luther Customer Case Study
• www.polycom.com/it

*Comments quoted by survey respondents have not been attributed to respect the anonymity of the contributor.*
Human Resources Professionals are Increasingly Using Video Collaboration to Widen Their Talent Pool, Reduce Recruitment Time and Develop and Retain Talent

The way organizations operate has evolved and so has the way we recruit. For many HR professionals, having the ability to work efficiently across borders and time zones is seen as a huge advantage in managing talent. Video collaboration has made distance irrelevant. The ability to interview more applicants in a shorter amount of time is delivering productivity gains, with improved screening processes contributing to stronger talent pipelines.

- Recruit faster
- Used for staff retention programs
- Allows training to be company wide
- Provide flexible working environments

Improved human collaboration is also seen as an advantage of video collaboration with respondents citing more personal communication and the ability to build relationships with employees based in remote locations.

“We recruit across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and video collaboration technology helps me recruit without boundaries, I can organize interviews between candidates and managers across locations and time zones without the cost of travel”

So is there room to improve? For some HR professionals, fear of change is seen as one of the most significant challenges to overcome with employees slow to adapt to new technology.

With location no longer an issue, HR professionals are seeing this translate into immediate cost savings. Video collaboration is enabling them to reach any employee, anywhere and in any time zone. Additionally, HR can both defy distance and defy time by being able to record and provide on-demand training, available to the entire organization, without traveling and at a time that suits the individual.

“Connecting with candidates without the initial expense of flying the candidate in….it also enhances the on-boarding process and training for management.”

Additional Resources:
- www.polycom.com/hr

80% of HR professionals believe that video conferencing is helpful in achieving their goals and objectives and for their organization.

*Comments quoted by survey respondents have not been attributed to respect the anonymity of the contributor.*
Facilities managers understand the benefits of video collaboration with 86% acknowledging it is helpful.

Video-Enabled Facilities Managers are Driving Productivity Gains and Fostering Innovation

Virtual site visits and content sharing in real time are helping facilities managers defy distance, overcoming the challenge of always being there.

A key part of the globalization challenge is balancing the impact of real estate expenses on the company’s books while providing flexible and extended workspaces that foster innovation and collaboration.

“It would offer real time inspection data and visual aid. It would also cut down on travel costs.”

In line with global trends of increased teleworking and working across multiple time zones, video collaboration is helping facilities managers meet the needs of their geographically dispersed workforces.

Move over hot desk, it’s time for the hot office. Our research also shows that for some companies, video collaboration is helping facilities managers solve the challenge of accommodating their growing workforces when office space is in short supply.

The ability to bring people together to collaborate and share information face to face was also seen as a major benefit for facilities managers.

“We have a few telepresence units in different company locations which are very helpful in bringing together people and information during meetings. It brings together people for meeting face to face and sharing information from all different locations.”

Additional Resources:
• Catlin Customer Case Study
• www.polycom.com/facilities

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93% of marketers believe video conferencing helps drive their business with more than half of them saying it greatly helps.

Video Collaboration Continues to Change How Marketers Work Together

It’s no secret. Marketing is a highly visual profession. The ability to connect and collaborate, bringing marketing teams and their clients together is seen as one of the stand-out benefits of video collaboration.

Many respondents cite video collaborations for enabling their teams to better communicate and work together more efficiently, from strategy development through to execution.

• Speeds up decision making
• Aids productivity
• Improves creative buy-in
• Unifies distributed teams

In fact, 93% of marketing professionals believe video collaboration could help them do their job more effectively.

“Great to be able to share ideas, share content. Half of our marketing team is in a different office so we use video frequently”

For many, video and its ability to allow real-time, face-to-face dialogue, from brainstorms to presentation of ideas, from planning to launches, enables marketers to respond to market needs faster and more efficiently. Other applications such as media and analyst dialogue provides high quality and more frequent interactions. Using video for Sales training and enablement, either in real-time or on-demand via recorded sessions, has also saved time and costs for marketing organizations who can now perform these remotely.

Additional Resources:
• Lexus Customer Case Study
• www.polycom.com/marketing

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75% of finance executives have a very positive response to video collaboration.

Video-Enabled Finance Executives are Realizing Financial Objectives and Benefiting from The Collaborative Environment

It’s no longer just about saving money when it comes to the key benefits video delivers to the finance team. The majority of finance professionals believe that video collaboration’s ability to improve collaboration is its key benefit.

“It allows the most realistic form of collaboration and strengthens presentations through 3D visuals which aid in describing financial goals”

Finance executives cite the following benefits from video collaboration:

- Increased efficiency/productivity
- Reduced travel costs
- Expedited decision making
- Ability to effectively share and explain excel spreadsheets and data

Finance executives want to see the people they are talking to, share remote content including visual aids that help describe financial goals and believe video collaboration will make them look more professional when meeting with external stakeholders.

Many financial executives specifically cite the ability to share and discuss spreadsheets in real-time, enables their teams to consolidate financial data more rapidly, thus providing management with timely information for faster decision-making.

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83% of engineers believe video collaboration helps their business, especially with real-time collaboration.

Video Collaboration Enables Engineers To Streamline Production Processes and Reduce Time to Market

For engineers, often working with multiple stakeholders in different locations, the ability to create a stronger collaboration environment in real-time is seen as one of the key benefits of using video for remote collaboration.

Gains in productivity through faster sharing of content and reduced need for travel are seen as beneficial. Particularly when trying to secure agreements on concepts and plans.

• Reduce time-to-market
• Streamline the production process and accelerate decision making
• Share subject matter experts company wide
• Save on travel costs

For some engineers, collaboration and human interaction is a positive benefit of video collaboration and the ability to see and read body language and facial expressions in meetings is also viewed as important.

“Allowing us real-time connection to multiple offices sharing details and ideas. Something web collaboration is not helpful with, it’s a little one-dimensional.”

Video collaboration makes it much easier for development teams to access knowledge from different areas, participate in richly connected social networks, and test different ideas more quickly.

Additional Resources:
• POSCO Customer Case Study
• www.polycom.com/engineering

*Comments quoted by survey respondents have not been attributed to respect the anonymity of the contributor.
73% of customer service professionals state video collaboration is helpful, with the majority stating it greatly helps their organization.

Customer Service Maximizing Customer Satisfaction

Research clearly shows the majority of customer service professionals are looking for video collaboration solutions to help customer experience.

Many respondents cite improved productivity, allowing them to work smarter through faster sharing of information and greater collaboration.

In some cases, customer service executives see the benefits of video collaboration as a way to solve customer problems. One organization is exploring how to introduce video technology to help solve customer problems more efficiently.

They also saw the benefits of video:

• Bringing customer service professionals closer to their customers and support teams
• Improving connectivity and empathy
• Ability to immediately connect with internal resources to solve customer escalations

After all, customers are people too not just text in an email.

“Video collaboration allows us to bring a face to our brand when dealing with our remote customers.”

“Customer service is changing from a cost center to a competitive differentiator,” says Forrester in ‘Top 15 Trends For Customer Service In 2013’. “Customer service organizations are gradually adopting a balanced scorecard of metrics that include not only cost and compliance, but also customer satisfaction.”

*Comments quoted by survey respondents have not been attributed to respect the anonymity of the contributor.

Additional Resources:
• www.polycom.com/customerservice
92% of sales professionals state video conferencing is helpful, especially when engaging with their customers.

Video Collaboration is Improving Customer Relationships and Accelerating Sales Cycles

Sales professionals understand the power of remote video collaboration with 92% of those surveyed believing it can help them achieve sales success.

Successful sales people have great relationships with their customers and great relationships are built from great collaboration.

Video collaboration helps:
• Extend the reach of existing sales teams
• Improve customer relationships
• Instantaneously bring in experts over video into your sales calls to accelerate sales cycles
• Distributed sales teams work together more efficiently

Perhaps not surprising, the survey shows that having the ability to collaborate visually is seen as extremely important for sales professionals. However in some markets, respondents feel traditional face-to-face sales meetings are still essential so getting the balance right here is seen as important.

The survey also found that video collaboration allows sales professionals to demonstrate their professional expertise while also continuing to build the all-important face-to-face relationships even from afar.

Additional Resources:
• www.polycom.com/sales
With video, a candidate can be interviewed by several people in the organization, from any location, in just one visit as the solutions deliver lifelike video and voice quality and full motion content sharing securely.

Maximize your remote collaboration environment and enhance your organization’s human interaction

To start your journey to defy distance consider the following:

1. **Make sure the solution is open and interoperable.**
   Great communication technologies are about bringing people together not keeping them apart. In a world of multi-vendor environments, interoperability is mission critical. Our customers tell us they require solutions that ‘talk’ to each other.

2. **Choose a solution that is easy to use.**
   Video collaboration adoption requires systems to be easy to use and manage, and also deliver a consistent great experience anywhere and on any platform from boardroom to tablet.

3. **Investment protection is essential.**
   Systems and services need to be backward-and forward-compatible to protect existing investments.

4. **Total cost of ownership is important.**
   Systems and services should go in quickly without requiring forklift upgrades or costly gateways, and deliver the best user experience and broadest multi-vendor integration, which when combined dramatically reduce an organization’s total cost.

5. **Ensure enterprise-level security and carrier grade scalability.**
   Video collaboration needs to be universally accessible, connecting any number of people across any network, protocol, application, or device. Organizations can achieve the highest possible quality from low-bandwidth networks by utilizing high performance compression technologies for carrying video and solutions for ensuring voice and video integrity even during packet loss over IP networks.

6. **Integrate and streamline.**
   Users need video to be integrated with popular communication platforms and normal day to day workflows. Choose intelligent infrastructure that removes the impediments to ubiquitous video by making simple-to-use, interoperable, secure video conferencing available to everyone across any network, protocol, application, or device of choice.

*Comments quoted by survey respondents have not been attributed to respect the anonymity of the contributor.*
The World is Ready to Collaborate. Are You?

The survey findings confirmed that video conferencing and content sharing is the most effective technology for helping people across job functions, geographies and industries defy distance through remote collaboration.

We live in a world filled with distance. Not just the miles that stretch between Meeting Room A and Conference Room B. We’re talking about the misunderstanding that lingers between hypothesis and proof. The time that passes between diagnosis and cure. The revisions that multiply between major bug and “easy fix.”

Business professionals operating at all levels of their organization from CEO to sales force understand how powerful video collaboration is in bringing people together in real time to improve productivity and create efficiencies, and essentially, defy distance.

Video conferencing is delivering measurable results. It is no longer just about saving travel time and associated costs. It is about giving organizations a critical edge by producing faster and more successful results.

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. More than 400,000 companies and institutions worldwide defy distance with video, voice and content solutions from Polycom.

Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience and unmatched investment protection.

Visit www.polycom.com/businessfunction for more information, tools and resources to help you get the most out of voice and video collaboration.

If you have not yet tried Polycom voice, video, content sharing and recording technology what are you waiting for?

Polycom gives us the scalability to accommodate any scenario we will face. New York Network VIEW is built to accommodate 5,000 simultaneous users. From a scalability standpoint, we’re still in first or second gear.

Neil Satterly, Executive Director, New York Network