Creating a Culture of Video Collaboration
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Recently Quocirca, a research firm specializing in the business impact of information technology, surveyed 800 organizations to develop an independent report uncovering issues facing organizations working to maximize the effectiveness of video conferencing.

The results, outlined in the report “Visual Appeal: Growing the Value of Video Conferencing by Fostering a Culture of Adoption” digs deep into the critical drivers—both challenges and opportunities—in the adoption of video communication. Quocirca finds that improved quality, increased affordability, and greater reliability have made video conferencing a more attractive option for remote collaboration. However, like most new technologies, there are procedural and cultural changes that must occur to ensure success.

Polycom has been studying these challenges and opportunities for years—both leading and refining the technology advances, and empowering our partners and customers to help video conferencing meet its full potential.

According to both the Quocirca report and Polycom’s hands-on experience deploying solutions around the world, companies that strive to increase adoption should create modern video conferencing plans that:

1. Start with the right solution
2. Deploy, train, and measure for success
3. Address any questions upfront

Creating a successful video conferencing plan

1. Start with the right collaboration solution

A successful video conferencing plan starts with the selection and design of the right solution—one that offers real value to the organization and user. The first step is to assess the actual collaboration goals and evaluate whether video conferencing is, in fact, right for an organization or department.

Once video conferencing is confirmed as a smart decision, the focus should be on optimizing business outcomes, improving workflows, and identifying the correct use cases rather than product specifications or features. By establishing clear goals, mutually understood expectations and definitions of success, the customer and solution provider will be aligned from the start.

Solution design and envisioning services can help with this process. They can translate business needs into technical requirements and establish a detailed architectural design based on these requirements. They can then translate that design into an integrated and seamless solution deployment. Such features as integrating into email and calendaring, and even natively integrating video into HR or CRM tools, can create a much greater likelihood of success.

Case in point: For an organization in the public sector, the benefits of performing hearings, supervision cases and other public safety initiatives over crystal clear video conferencing were obvious from the start. But with a wide variety of potential users, it was crucial that the system was extremely simple, and worked with other technologies. From the planning stages, Polycom simplified their standard video conferencing interface, making it much like dialing a phone, while also integrating the system with any other system that could be in place at user endpoints. The result was greater adoption, ultimately leading to a significant ROI.

2. Deploy and train and measure for success

Even the most expertly designed solution will not be embraced without organic support. Any video conferencing deployment should include training and exposure for at least a core team that can monitor and adjust adoption. For solutions that involve “video for everyone,” a model that many departments and even entire companies are beginning to move toward, this training and exposure is even more crucial and should be pushed out as broadly as possible.

Today, most services engagements are focused on installation and support. Where they are missing a great opportunity is in post-deployment. Reporting, analytics, and adoption consulting services can be extremely helpful in making video communication not just successful, but having it shift corporate culture. In some cases, it may even make sense to continue outsourcing of ongoing operations through managed services that will help everyone remain aligned toward overall solution goals.

Case in point: A North American technology company had used video conferencing with limited success. To grow the company’s potential, Polycom worked with those closest to the system. Through careful analysis, some minor changes were made—video and audio conferencing were integrated and made available via easy-access VMRs (virtual meeting rooms), and scheduled use of video was switched to ad hoc. Today, 90% of all meetings use video, versus 20–30% just two years ago.
3. Address questions of comfort, availability, and ease of use upfront
Even when solution design and deployment are flawless, internal unknowns and questions can slow the success of a video conferencing solution. In these cases, often what is most needed is education:

Comfort with being “on screen”:
Replacing audio phone calls with video chats can be a change for some users initially; however, the benefits far outweigh those initial awkward moments. Once video is set up in an environment that eases anxiety (ideal lighting, seating and interfaces are a must), an evolution occurs. Through continued exposure to video, those immersed in the technology usually forget their initial hesitation within weeks. As one user admits, “I’m an extreme introvert, but I don’t mind video conferencing because it’s just part of my workday. Anything becomes comfortable when you do it daily.”

Anywhere/anytime availability:
For video conferencing would-be users who cite restrictive access as their greatest frustration, on-the-go solutions are the answer. Now available on desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones and generally any mobile device, very few business users are ever without a way to connect. Integration between devices has become virtually seamless when set up correctly and afforded the proper infrastructure, and the results have reached far beyond traditional business use cases. In education, parent teacher conferences are now taking place with the teacher at school and parents at home or work. In healthcare, medical experts in different locations are sharing treatment plans via mobile devices. And in real estate, home appraisals, inspections and potential buyer walk-throughs can now be done from afar. The opportunities span through countless industries.

Ease of use:
Those who find video conferencing to be complicated or unreliable should evaluate today’s updated systems and support. A collaboration system should be intuitive and readily demonstrate benefits to the user. Taking advantage of training, including self-serve training content such as short video clips that explain how to access the video conferencing system, zoom in on speakers within the video, change video views, easily connect via a laptop, share documents and demos, and more, are making adoption simple even for those with limited technical experience.

On a corporate level, consulting services and methodologies for how, when, where and why to use video conferencing are also available to help shift toward more collaborative cultures. These can increase user comfort levels, ultimately driving higher utilization and the ongoing use of video collaboration.

Unlimited potential
Smart organizations invest in video conferencing not because of advanced technical features, but because of how video communication is going to drive business evolution over time. They invest to compete against companies who are already using collaborative cultures to innovate, bring products to market faster, and make quicker, more effective decisions. They invest to drive growth and leave those competitive organizations behind.

While creating the right solution, training employees, and removing concerns related to usability, comfort and ease of use are a great start in unlocking potential, leading companies will go even further. They will first take into account all crucial factors to success, such as:

- The ideal experience for end users
- Where, when and how video can be incorporated into current workflows and practices
- The broader audience of employees, partners and vendors that could connect via video
- Quality and quantity necessary to achieve video communication goals

Then, to help gauge these factors and more, they should consider analytics tools that can monitor usage, provide clear dashboards on how a system is working, and uncover trends, delivering relevant information to key stakeholders.

Polycom’s adoption approach
At Polycom, fostering adoption and engagement of video conferencing is more important than selling systems. Many initiatives have been designed with that singular goal, including the creation of the Polycom Adoption Portal.

Providing video tutorials, how-to’s, FAQs, blogs and other content as an always-current and always-available array of education and training resources, Polycom allows organizations to create their own customized online resources for their users. These resources minimize the time and expense required for in-person training while increasing access for all users at any time.

Along with Polycom’s Adoption Portal, users also have access to a cloud-based analytics tool that can measure usage, success, and any bumps along the road to full organizational adoption. Together, these benefits help the video communication solutions and their practitioners work smarter, communicate more effectively, and have more time to get done what they need to do.
The results are best understood straight from users themselves. In a recent Wainhouse Research end user survey*, 94% of Polycom customers reported that video collaboration increased efficiency and productivity, while 88% related that it increased the impact of their decisions. 87% of customers confirmed that video collaboration both accelerated decision-making and reduced travel costs. In short, once video communication is in place, the potential for organizational improvement is nearly boundless.


To learn more about fostering adoption, as well as analyzing that adoption and engagement for continued success, download the Quocirca report, read more about Polycom’s Adoption Portal and get access to overview videos, datasheets and Quick Reference Guides, or reach out to a partner or Polycom representative to learn more about available IT Adoption Services.

About Polycom
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.