Taking Visual Collaboration to the Next Level: Plan Use Cases, Architecture, and Adoption

What You Will Learn

Today, organizations use video for more than just meetings from conference room to conference room. Video collaboration can be a very personal experience when people at all levels of an organization can choose the solution appropriate for them and participate in video calls with anyone, anywhere.

This paper, intended for IT leaders, explains the skills needed to continually increase the business value of telepresence:

- Consider how you can expand telepresence beyond meetings and extend it outside the boardroom to desktops and mobile devices
- Introduce management tools the IT team can use to plan capacity, monitor the user experience to meet service-level agreements, troubleshoot, and keep video secure
- Maximize adoption by identifying and overcoming cultural, behavioral, or organizational barriers

IT teams that do not have the internal resources to deliver these services can obtain the needed expertise from Cisco Services together with our partners.

Making Visual Collaboration Pervasive

After adopting telepresence for one business need, often travel reduction or expedited decision making, IT teams often receive new application requests, such as using visual collaboration to enable meetings with remote attendees, consolidate communications infrastructure, enable mobile workers and BYOD, collaborate with external organizations, and deliver online events and training (Table 1).

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Figure 1. Examples of Visual Collaboration Use Cases and Associated Business Values

Use Case	Business Values
Enable Meetings with Remote Attendees	Accelerate decision making by reducing communications delay. Reduce employee travel, real-estate costs, and greenhouse gas emissions by meeting virtually and supporting telecommuting. Build trust and understanding across time zones within cross functional and diverse teams with rich and frequent video communications. Encourage participation, information sharing, and knowledge building.
Consolidate Communications Infrastructure	Reduce total cost of IT ownership with a single infrastructure and simplified management. Adapt more quickly and flexibly to company changes and increase responsiveness by blending deployment models. Improve access and user experience by supporting mobile work styles and device choices. Substantially reduce operational overhead by using a single call-control architecture for voice, video, and conferencing while still accommodating TDM or SIP-based systems as needed.
Enable Mobile Workers and BYOD	Per research from Forrester, among organizations that implement BYOD strategies: • 76% report increased employee responsiveness and decision-making speed • Nearly 60% report faster internal issue resolution • 43% to 46% report faster customer-issue resolution and improved customer satisfaction
Collaborate with External Organizations	• Technology-enabled collaboration with external stakeholders correlates positively with market-share gains. (McKinsey Global Institute) • 53% of CEOs in outperforming organizations partner exclusively for collaborative innovation. (IBM) • 31% to 33% of organizations are developing mobility strategies and policies that support communications with partners and suppliers. (Forrester)
Deliver Online Events and Training	Reach more people by allowing remote attendance to company events, department meetings, and training. Improve participant engagement in large-scale meetings by integrating polling, Q&A, and commenting. Enable speakers, experts, and attendees to participate in-person and virtually from anywhere in the world. Improve learning through two-way interaction with video, chats, and polls. Monitor audience attention, content retention, and social media comments.

But introducing new use cases requires overcoming several barriers. First, you need to sell the business value of the investment to business leaders who control the budget. This typically requires going outside the IT organization to obtain inputs to make the business case for cost savings, increased agility, faster time to market, increased customer intimacy, and so on.

Second, as you deploy more video endpoints and integrate telepresence into more business processes, the IT team will need management tools to continuously monitor the user experience, troubleshoot, and remediate issues. Visibility is essential to providing the high quality of experience needed for adoption.

Finally, you might need to identify and overcome adoption barriers. For example, employees might not realize that today's advanced visual collaboration options bear little resemblance to early video conferencing systems, which were difficult to use and plagued by poor image quality.

The remainder of this paper describes the skill sets you need to take telepresence to the next level. IT organizations that do not have internal resources with these skills can work with an experienced visual collaboration services partner.

Consider Additional Use Cases

There are many use cases for visual collaboration that will help your organization maximize ROI, while also providing benefits in other areas such as customer satisfaction, innovation and growth, productivity and employee engagement. In Table 1, we've highlighted a few use cases and the associated business values that are often enjoyed by the groups that implement visual collaboration in these ways.

Obtaining executive buy-in for new visual collaboration programs requires discussing the use case in terms of business benefits, not technology – for example, increased agility, simplified processes, and lower costs. Financial ROI models are especially persuasive, and telepresence services partners such as Cisco® Services offer online ROI calculators.

When developing the business case, you will also need to know the necessary technical capabilities such as interoperability, business-to-business calling, multicast, or streaming.

Design the Visual Collaboration Architecture and Use Policy

Extending the initial telepresence environment to more users or to support different business needs requires more than standard planning, design, and implementation services. To truly maximize ROI from visual collaboration, you need a vision, strategy, and a phased roadmap to get there.

An end-to-end visual collaboration solution incorporates a full suite of telepresence endpoints, infrastructure for multiple environments, and centralized management tools. You can expand it even further by integrating with external devices such as mobility and productivity tools such as Cisco WebEx™ meeting applications.

When designing the visual collaboration architecture, the IT team or its telepresence service partner needs to consider:

- **Network capacity:** Assess the need for upgrades to the current network and video infrastructure. For example, you might need to provide secure access for people joining telepresence sessions from outside the firewall or with mobile devices. Be sure to factor in network demands from other in-progress or planned video projects. Inadequate bandwidth capacity, processing bottlenecks, or inappropriate network design can compromise mission-critical applications and negatively affect the adoption of video and other communication tools. Accurately estimating network capacity typically requires input from both the networking and video teams.

- **New data center requirements:** Determine if you need more storage capacity for recorded video sessions. If your organization is implementing other video programs, and external devices such as mobility and productivity tools such as Cisco WebEx™ meeting applications, you can often reduce costs by sharing

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Visual Collaboration Services Example

Utility Company Improves Organizational Communications

Situation: A U.S. utility service provider had initially implemented telepresence to stream executive communications to dozens of satellite offices, to reduce travel costs and increase the efficiency of organizational communications. But trainers still traveled to remote locations, incurring high costs.

Solution: The company worked with Cisco Services to implement the technology and processes to also use telepresence for new-hire training.

common resources like storage. Also assess whether it makes the most sense in your environment to host video services in the cloud or on premises.

- **Security policy:** Revisit the security plan to make sure it addresses the new user groups or business cases on your roadmap. Consider mobile device policy, securing communications streams, and whether to limit access to features such as recording or streaming.
- **Management:** Scaling a visual collaboration deployment requires mature management interfaces for visibility, troubleshooting, and remediation. These tools help to deliver the quality of experience needed to achieve the business goals and can also minimize staffing requirements. Today's advanced management tools provide service-level monitoring, automatic assignment of user endpoints to switch ports, trace routing along the full call path, and automated video transcoding.

Maximize Adoption

The measure of success for visual collaboration is not whether the technology works, but the degree to which it contributes to business value such as cost savings, more effective teams, shorter decision-making cycles, and so on.

High adoption is critical to all of these outcomes. As more people use a network technology such as mobile phones, instant messaging (IM), texting or telepresence, that technology becomes exponentially more valuable, a phenomenon known as the "network effect." Therefore, to maximize adoption, begin by assigning a staff member or engaging a partner to identify successful adopters and promote their experiences.

Equally important are identifying and overcoming barriers to more widespread adoption. A Cisco Collaboration services partner can bring the outside perspective helpful for identifying cultural, behavioral, or organizational barriers.

For example, adoption can suffer when only certain users are allowed to use advanced telepresence features such as recording and streaming because of limited bandwidth or training resources. In this situation, employees with full privileges might adopt telepresence enthusiastically, while the others do not. If you are limiting privileges, it is worthwhile to determine if the business benefits of higher adoption would pay for any necessary investments.

Overcoming barriers to increase visual collaboration adoption requires the following skill sets:

- Assessing the effects of wider adoption of telepresence on bandwidth and training.
- Developing a strategy and governance policies. This might involve analyzing the implications of opening telepresence rooms to more people, for example, and possibly even requiring it instead of certain types of trips.
- Marketing visual collaboration throughout the organization.

Visual Collaboration Services Example

University Rolled Out New Video Capabilities in Phases

Situation: Different groups in the university community were independently pursuing video initiatives, including immersive telepresence, desktop telepresence, video on demand, streaming, and recording. Without an overall strategy, they were likely to make redundant investments and make decisions that degraded overall network performance.

Solution: The IT team engaged a services partner to help develop a strategic roadmap. One goal was introducing new telepresence capabilities in the right order to maximize ROI. After performing a gap analysis, the services partner developed a customized video roadmap tied to the university's budget. The plan included activities to begin transforming the existing network into a medianet, optimized to deliver a high-quality experience while minimizing management burden.

- Developing training materials, such as video on demand or one-page posters in conference rooms that show how to share a presentation, whom to contact for help, and so on.

Keep in mind that change management is essential. Without effective change management, adoption rates tend to level out after early adopters have joined the program.

Conclusion

Adding new visual collaboration use cases that provide real business value requires a well-planned business strategy, architecture, and adoption plan. This requires a wide variety of business and technical skills. Some of these are interviewing business users, calculating ROI, implementing management tools, and promoting internal successes to encourage adoption.

Organizations that do not have these skills internally can work with a telepresence services partner. Benefits can include:

- Earlier realization of business value
- Greater ROI
- Improved operational efficiency that lowers costs
- Improved and innovative services for your customers, employees, and business partners

For More Information

To find out more about visual collaboration from Cisco Services together with our partners, contact your local Cisco account representative or visit www.cisco.com/go/collaborationservices.

To read a white paper series entitled "Harnessing Business Video for Business Transformation," visit www.cisco.com/go/services/businessvideo/whitepapers.

Enterprise Competes Effectively with the Allure of Frequent Flier Programs

Situation: An enterprise introduced telepresence with the goal of travel reduction. But employees expressed dismay that they would lose frequent flier points.

Solution: A services partner worked with company to develop an appealing incentive program for using telepresence to meet with customers. After calculating the real costs of business trips, the partner recommended giving employees credits for each video conference that actually replaced travel. Employees could accumulate credits to earn up to five days of personal time off annually. Employees embraced the incentive program, enabling the company to save millions of dollars a year on travel reduction without damaging morale.

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