



Empower Your Business with Continuous Communications

Seamlessly Build Video Conferencing and Collaboration into your Communications Solution

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

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Introduction 3

Market-Shaping Trends: Consumerization and the Era of User-Driven IT..... 4

Business Use Cases for Video and Web Conferencing..... 5

The Imperative to Provide Any-to-Any Connectivity..... 6

Solution Spotlight: 8x8 Virtual Office Meetings..... 7

Customer Examples and Use Cases..... 8

Conclusion..... 9

INTRODUCTION

Enterprise conferencing and collaboration technologies today stand at an exciting crossroads. Solutions that were once considered consumer technologies are moving into the enterprise. Never has this trend been more pronounced than now, as consumerization of IT and mobile device proliferation increasingly break down the walls between business and consumer use. As a result, enterprise solutions must become increasingly simpler to deploy and more intuitive to use. At the same time they must deliver a secure and seamless communications experience. As the worlds of consumer and business communications blend, walking the line between the two has become top of mind for users and IT decision makers alike. Businesses must capitalize on these tectonic shifts in user preferences by deploying agile communications that today's mobile users need in order to collaborate effectively wherever they are.

In a survey of IT staff and end users who have deployed Google Apps at the office, two-thirds of the IT respondents and 58% of end users said they are willing to spend their own money on technologies that will make their work lives easier and/or more productive.¹ This represents a huge shift in how communication applications are being used and has a big impact on what "enterprise" IT will look like in the future. Savvy IT and business leaders must have a clear-cut vision to enable applications that foster effective collaboration and meet the growing employee desire to "get the job done" or users will get a multitude of their choice of tools anyway.

A growing number of businesses today are relying on leading-edge video and Web collaboration tools to transform their companies, seeking to radically improve employee productivity and customer reach. Advances in video technology and availability of video capabilities on almost all personal devices have led to the democratization of video. The growing appetite for video opens a new world where businesses can leverage the power of video conferencing, along with content sharing, to increase their reach and effectiveness. Businesses can now enable employees to initiate and join video and Web collaboration from their personal smartphones, and they can share and collaborate over content in Box, Dropbox, Google Drive, or other communication applications that the users prefer.

In the past, video and Web conferencing adoption was hindered by the traditional barriers of complexity and costs. Today's users are ready for the new world of collaboration that supports a distributed and mobile workforce over their choice of devices and networks. The rapid shift to next-generation devices and infrastructure is bringing down the barriers to adoption. Leading-edge organizations are using video and Web conferencing for both internal and external communications, with little or no CapEx investment, no bulky hardware to manage, and no new devices or endpoints to purchase. As a result, several new applications and use cases are emerging to enable video everywhere.

This paper discusses the evolving trends and use cases in Web and video conferencing, and the imperative for IT to provide a unified suite of communications that fosters rich collaboration between employees and with customers. This paper also presents one vendor's approach to address the growing opportunities to build an agile business by implementing scalable and reliable video and Web conferencing.

MARKET-SHAPING TRENDS: CONSUMERIZATION AND THE ERA OF USER-DRIVEN IT

Built-in video cameras on laptops, smartphones, and tablets have turned everyday devices into video conferencing endpoints, leading to ubiquitous video capabilities. Applications such as Google Hangouts, Skype, and Facetime have found inroads among business users.

The lines between consumer and business video are increasingly blurred. The proliferation of consumer video combined with Bring Your Own Device/Application (BYOD/BYOA) trends have made video communications a way of life.

In recent years, the demand for video conferencing among businesses has increased significantly as companies seek greater productivity, faster decision making, and savings on travel costs. Consider the following stats from a 2016 Frost & Sullivan survey of North American decision makers that drives home the value of video conferencing as a critical communications tool.

Exhibit 1: Video Collaboration: Growing Adoption and Performance Impact on Workplace Transformation

61% use video conferencing for their business communications
53% use video conferencing on a daily or weekly basis
While travel reduction and cost savings (71%) are top drivers, 72% say they use video collaboration to accelerate decision making
66.3% of users say video collaboration contributes to improving productivity and revenues

Source: Frost & Sullivan Survey "The Future of Enterprise Communications in the Workplace: An End-user Perspective" February 2016

Despite the growing demand for video conferencing, its adoption has remained restricted. Complex solutions, high costs, stringent network requirements, and lack of interoperability have kept usage confined to "controlled" environments.

Business users now want to extend the benefits of video to a growing number of use cases that offer more engaging experiences. And they want to do this with the same level of comfort, ease of use, and anytime, anywhere connectivity that they experience using consumer video. As a result, the technologies that deliver video and Web conferencing are evolving to power the next wave of communications.

Exhibit 2 depicts the several technology and market enablers that are fueling this transition.

Exhibit 2: Video and Web Conferencing: Key Technology Enablers



Source: Frost & Sullivan

BUSINESS USE CASES FOR VIDEO AND WEB CONFERENCING

Video and Web conferencing add another dimension to business interactions creating a stickier user experience and driving collaboration and productivity.

- **Engaging Communications** – By enabling face-to-face communications through the use of video conferencing and content sharing, businesses can establish a more personal relationship between distributed teams and with their customers, an experience that is head and shoulders above basic telephone services.
- **Drive Sales** – High-quality interactions with prospects enhance the sales process and also provide upsell/cross-sell opportunities.
- **Improved Decision Making** – Seamless content sharing and video conferencing can be used to show clear examples of complex procedures for faster problem resolution. Furthermore, employees can make better decisions informed by a caller's body language and demeanor.
- **Enhance Efficiencies** – Video and Web conferencing allow businesses to access pools of experts and extend the reach of talent. The concept of remote experts to provide services, as if they were present in-person, drives cost efficiencies without taking away from business productivity.

Video and Web conferencing are enabling a host of user applications across the enterprise, such as marketing, sales, HR, and investor relations. Equally exciting opportunities are emerging in vertical use cases (see Exhibit 3). Consider scenarios such as a virtual loan specialist at a mortgage lender or a real estate agent showing properties to a remote client, or an enterprise technology salesperson screen sharing and demoing for customers. These are just a few examples of the rich world of video and Web interactions. The opportunities are endless and are only beginning to be explored.

Exhibit 3: Video and Web Conferencing – Growing Opportunities

Healthcare	Financial Services	Education	Retail	Manufacturing
				
• Telemedicine – patient-to-physician consultation • Home care and remote patient monitoring • Remote expertise for specialty services like Telestroke, Telemental Health, and Telesurgery	• Mobile banking • Video kiosks • Remote experts and loan specialists • Insurance – damage appraisal and claims servicing • Wealth management for high net worth clients	• Online video – classrooms • mLearning (mobile learning) – rich content that can be consumed anytime, anywhere • Parent-teacher interaction in K-12 environment • Online admission interviews	• In-store video kiosks for customer service • Video-enabled online customer support • Sophisticated self-service solutions	• Foster open innovation – gather ideas beyond company walls • Virtual customer focus groups • Product launches • Remote quality control and supply chain management

Source: Frost & Sullivan

THE IMPERATIVE TO PROVIDE ANY-TO-ANY CONNECTIVITY

Technology advancements are pushing the bounds and reach of video conferencing from immersive telepresence suites and conference rooms to desktop and mobile devices, allowing for rich communications all the way from the consumer in the field to the corporate boardroom. This is also empowering mobile users with more productivity-enhancing features so that they are no longer treated as “second-class citizens.”

Advances such as HD video and the ability to seamlessly schedule and join meetings, as well as share content while on the go, are turning ordinary phone calls into productive meetings for mobile users. The impetus for this transition has been an influx of user-driven devices, which have led to multiple entry points for video. Frost & Sullivan research forecasts that the number of organizations providing BYOD support will grow from 64% in 2013 to 79% in 2018. According to the same research, more and more personal (or personally liable) mobile devices will access enterprise IT resources than corporate-owned (or corporate liable) devices within the next few years.²

One of the biggest unknowns in video and Web conferencing applications is varying network and bandwidth conditions that exist in consumer environments. For businesses looking to implement effective video and Web collaboration, a key requirement is to implement solutions that are extremely fault tolerant to varying network conditions. The onset of mobility and BYOD demands that users should be able to use their device of choice to connect with anyone over any device or network. It is also imperative that users must be able to do this effortlessly, reliably and continuously—without switching between multiple apps for their diverse communication needs. As a result, businesses must find new ways to provide agile communications that can adjust to customers’ varied devices, infrastructure, and networks.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT: 8X8 VIRTUAL OFFICE MEETINGS

In recent years, newer approaches to video and Web conferencing have removed the traditional barriers to complexity and costs. They offer more attractive pricing and flexible deployment models, and capabilities that today's mobile users need to collaborate effectively wherever they are.

The 8x8 Virtual Office Meetings solution enables high-quality video conferencing and content sharing over any device and network. 8x8 delivers enterprise communications-as-a-service to more than 40,000 businesses operating in over 100 countries across six continents. 8x8 has been at the leading edge of taking the complexity out of cloud telephony, Web and video conferencing, contact center and business performance analytics.

Exhibit 4: Continuous Communication Anywhere, Any Device, Any Way



8x8's as-a-service approach extends the reach of its Virtual Office Meetings solution to desktop and mobile users over any network, including congestion- and packet-loss-prone Internet and wireless connections. Moreover, 8x8's video and Web conferencing solution is tightly integrated with the core cloud communications service, enabling users to schedule, join and start instant meetings from a single desktop and/or mobile app without the need to juggle between multiple apps and clients. Users have the same number across devices and seamlessly transition across voice calls, chats, document sharing and video conferencing with single sign on (SSO) and ongoing access to corporate directories and presence.

8x8 Virtual Office Meetings deliver high-quality HD video conferencing over any device and network, automatically adjusting performance based on available bandwidth and is extremely resilient, even in the most extreme conditions. Furthermore, mobile collaboration is also core to the 8x8 solution. Users can initiate collaboration sessions and share content from Dropbox, Box, Google Drive and Apple iCloud from their choice of mobile devices, all through the 8x8 mobile app. This unique approach is making effective video and Web collaboration a reality for 8x8 customers.

CUSTOMER EXAMPLES AND USE CASES

High Tech – Replicon

The Company – Replicon is a leading provider of cloud-based, time-tracking applications and has 1.5 million users worldwide and offices all over the globe. In the recent past, Replicon has opened two new offices and moved some existing offices to larger quarters. And with the company's domestic and international growth showing no signs of slowing down, the prospect of supporting an increasing number of users and locations posed a challenge for Global IT Director Neal Alberda.

Use Case – Video Conferencing Helps Recruit Top Talent Worldwide

Replicon turned to 8x8 for a scalable unified communications solution. With 8x8 hosted VoIP service now deployed at all six Replicon offices, the company is realizing many benefits. Among them is a video conferencing solution that is integrated with their centralized contact directory, which makes it easy for users to reach and schedule online meetings with colleagues at other company offices.

Along with hundreds of standard 8x8 VoIP phones, Replicon has purchased several dozen video phones. Some are used by senior management; the rest are installed in “interview rooms,” where managers in one country can conduct face-to-face interviews with prospective employees in another. This advanced capability helps Replicon recruit top talent worldwide.

“Although we're a growing global company, we still like to have that face-to-face contact when we're making hiring decisions. With 8x8 video conferencing, we can bring new employees on board with confidence.”
-Neal Alberda, Global IT Director, Replicon

Transportation Software Provider – TMW Systems

The Company – TMW Systems, Inc. is a leading supplier of technology solutions covering the transportation services sector.

After careful analysis of the escalating costs and management requirements, along with the feature, flexibility and disaster recovery limitations associated with TMW's premises-based phone system, Ron Godine, director of information technology at TMW Systems, decided to implement 8x8's Virtual Office cloud-based PBX and unified communications solution. TMW chose 8x8 Virtual Office to provide cloud-based hosted PBX and unified communications services to more than 800 employees in seven U.S. and Canadian locations. The deployment quickly grew to over 500 extensions and, soon after, TMW added unified communications capabilities, such as Web conferencing, Internet fax and call recording.

Use Case – Mobility

With the 8x8 Virtual Office cloud-based solution, TMW employees can access their core communications services from any location using an IP phone, PC and Web browser, or smart phone. In addition to enterprise-class phone service with unlimited calling and a wide array of PBX calling features, the service offers unlimited Web conferencing with video, call recording and archiving, chat, Internet fax, presence and voicemail management, and a Virtual Office mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

“ With our transition to 8x8’s cloud-based Virtual Office solution, we’ve been very impressed with the quality of calls, regardless of device. Now with new Virtual Office Meetings, 8x8 is taking meeting experiences to the next level with HD video and audio capabilities. TMW has over 800 employees spread in different offices across North America and we interact with hundreds of customers daily, so it’s vital that we can collaborate seamlessly and reliably, whether it’s by phone or video conferencing.

-Ron Godine, Director of Information Technology, TMW Systems ”

CONCLUSION

In today’s highly competitive business environment, top companies will be the ones that have developed innovative ways to create stellar communications experiences that keep the end users engaged—employees and customers alike. Video and Web conferencing have become well-established tools to drive rich internal as well as external communications. However, to make an impact, these collaboration tools must be reliable and intuitive to use. Continuous communication offers hassle-free integrated user experiences that fit today’s mobile work styles. Technology advancements and changing perceptions are opening up innovative opportunities, which offer businesses new avenues to create a competitive edge. Smart companies must catch on or get left behind.

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