



Video-enabled unified communications

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50 Years of Growth, Innovation and Leadership

Video-Enabled Unified Communications

Redefining Video to Meet its True Promise

A Frost & Sullivan
White Paper

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Communications

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INTRODUCTION

Video conferencing has proven to be a game-changer in the current business environment that is characterized by complex competitive and economic challenges. Businesses are rapidly adopting visual collaboration technologies that are enabling them to do more with less and maintain a competitive edge. In a recent Frost & Sullivan survey of C-level executives, video conferencing ranked high among key enterprise communication applications for awareness and usage. Eighty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they are aware of the benefits of video conferencing, with 58 percent using it within their companies. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they plan to either maintain or significantly increase the use of video conferencing in their organizations.

Video conferencing is helping businesses achieve better results at lower costs through faster decision-making, improved quality of interactions, and a more cost-efficient business collaboration. While the business benefits of video conferencing have been truly dramatic, a bulk of enterprise video conferencing deployments today remain a communication island of expensive devices that connect over dedicated networks in a tightly controlled environment. For video conferencing to become truly pervasive, organizations must transition video from a loosely connected communication silo to an integral part of an organization's core communications infrastructure.

The convergence of voice, video, and data communications on a shared IP infrastructure, combined with high-quality, low-priced video conferencing endpoints, offers organizations significant gains in business productivity. This white paper discusses the key benefits of video conferencing, the limitations associated with today's video conferencing deployments, and how the challenges facing video conferencing can be addressed by video-enabling Unified Communications.

VIDEO—THE NEW NORMAL FOR BUSINESS

Video conferencing solves several communication hurdles faced by organizations that are looking to connect globally dispersed teams in a cost-efficient manner. Video conferencing is enabling thousands of organizations to increasingly meet their business challenges in two ways: immediate cost- and time-savings generated from reduced travel, and enhanced workforce productivity resulting from improved business processes and communications.

The most widely used applications of video conferencing are internal meetings, sales and marketing, project management and R&D. Video conferencing is increasingly enabling various functional departments to serve their customers better and make faster decisions. In addition, there are several other compelling applications, such as telehealth, distance learning, corporate training, and judicial applications, among others.

Exhibit I: Video Conferencing: Factors Driving Adoption



Source: Frost & Sullivan

VIDEO CONFERENCING—GROWING OPPORTUNITIES, DAUNTING CHALLENGES

Video conferencing represents a high growth market that is being fueled by the increasing end user need to implement pervasive video across the organization. Standing at \$3.2 billion in 2012, the market for video conferencing systems and services is forecast to almost double to \$6.3 billion by 2016. This growth represents a swelling demand among enterprise users to use video for all aspects of enterprise communications.

While the benefits of video conferencing are clear, it has been riddled with several challenges related to use and management. More specifically, it has faced the following bottlenecks:

- **Limited Reach** – Due to the high costs associated with the devices and extensive infrastructure requirements, most of video conferencing today remains confined to conference rooms, restricting availability and reach.
- **Complex to Use** – Users often have difficulty launching calls and connecting to meetings, resulting in a less than optimal user experience.
- **Complex to Manage** – Most video conferencing deployments require extensive IT involvement and hand-holding through comprehensive support and services. Managing video conferencing apart from the rest of the enterprise communications applications stretches IT resources too thin and also makes the management a more complex task.

In a recent Frost & Sullivan survey, video conferencing users reported low usage throughout the organization since adoption is restricted to a few lines of business or senior management. Similarly, frequency of usage is lower compared to that of other communications tools. This can be explained by the high cost of the solution as well as by the fact that traditional video conferencing has been complex to use and manage.

There is a strong need among users today to integrate video into all their communications, including video at desktops and mobile devices, for anytime, anywhere communications. The consumerization of IT and the resulting BYOD trend, along with the sweeping adoption of social media networks, is leading to increased adoption of video in all its forms. Moreover, seamless B2B communications is becoming pertinent, as users look to extend the value of their video conferencing investments to internal as well as external users for maximizing the ROI. As a result, video conferencing deployments must meet the criteria of being scalable, flexible, and affordable for thousands of users in an organization.

VIDEO-ENABLED UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS—REDEFINING VIDEO CONFERENCING

Unified communications combines enterprise communications into a single, manageable interface, significantly reducing the latency of communications and improving collaboration. Powered with rich presence, Unified Communications lets users unify multiple communication modalities, enabling them to choose the best mode and time to communicate effectively—inside and outside the organization. Unified communications not only expands the integration between several communication applications, but also provides unified access across all available business applications, such as ERP, CRM and other critical business processes.

Adding video to Unified Communications is a natural evolution for an organization that is looking to extend the reach of video to all information workers. The unprecedented growth in demand for video conferencing in recent years has put a tremendous strain on IT resources and enterprise networks. By embedding video conferencing into the Unified Communications core, enterprises can experience a quantum leap in video features, interoperability, manageability, and scalability.

Exhibit 2: Placing Video in the Context of Unified Communications and Collaboration

<i>Dedicated Video Conferencing</i>	<i>Video-Enabled Unified Communications</i>
<i>“Technology Island”</i>	<i>Video tightly coupled with key communication apps; Enterprise-wide Unified Communications architecture</i>
<i>Varied standards (H.323 vs. SIP)</i>	<i>Common standards (with interoperability)</i>
<i>Separate administration</i>	<i>Common administration</i>
<i>Limited user access; Not scalable</i>	<i>Ubiquitous access; Scalable to thousands of users</i>
<i>Limited interoperability</i>	<i>Fully integrated into Unified Communications media, presence, applications</i>
<i>Disparate user experience</i>	<i>Consistent user experience across multiple modalities and devices</i>

VIBRANT CONVERSATIONS – UNLEASHING THE POWER OF VIRTUAL TEAMS

Siemens Enterprise Communications is one example of a UC vendor that has embedded immersive video capabilities into its unified communications framework today. Siemens OpenScape Media Server adds multi-party video conferencing capabilities to the OpenScape UC environment, while the OpenScape family of desktop and mobile UC clients features built-in HD video. These affordable software solutions extend feature-rich video conferencing to all users in the organization, and since it is part of the UC experience, video is readily available and easier to use than traditional standalone video conferencing products.

Looking forward, Siemens Enterprise Communications sees this as just one of the technical solutions to the fundamental challenge: improving the ability of teams to collaborate more effectively across distances. The company’s amplifyTEAMS vision is focused on enabling a completely new approach to communications, known as Vibrant Conversations, that weaves together multi-channel communications in a fluid, immersive experience. Embedding video into this experience is fundamental to making meetings more immersive and intimate.

CONCLUSION

Video will play a critical role in enabling the high-performance workplace of the future. As video becomes pervasive in all aspects of a business, IT departments must meet the challenge of making it scalable, flexible, and affordable. Video-enabling Unified Communications removes the latency in communications and offers a single call control and management. For the network administrator, the benefits are enormous: greater scale, reduced complexity, and integrated management of devices and accounts with tight policy control. Making video as simple as making a phone call has been the ultimate goal of video conferencing users for several years. Integration of video conferencing with Unified Communications makes it easy to use, more affordable and more flexible, while providing a consistent user experience across multiple modalities and devices that will result in increased usage.

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