



Driving Video Adoption in the Age of Ad Hoc Communication

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Work is no longer a place. Instead, we've gone digital and mobile, with business happening anytime and anywhere. What happens to face-to-face communication when it's not longer possible to walk down the hall, or grab a coffee on a Tuesday afternoon?

Video happens. Video enables that interaction, wherever people are located. It's an engaging and compelling platform that has quickly become an essential part of enterprise mobility. In a globalized economy, where team members span continents and pocket-sized devices are the norm, video can meet multifaceted business needs in a way other tools cannot.

Video Strikes The Right Balance Between Simple and Effective

Strong internal communication keeps teams informed and better able to respond to challenges and opportunities. The costs of falling short are high: A survey by Salesforce Ryppe found a vast majority of people (86 percent) blame poor collaboration or ineffective communication for workplace failures.

That's why an effective mobile strategy includes a suite of communication tools, many of which focus on communication and collaboration—file sharing, project management, chat, voice, instant messaging, screen sharing, and videoconferencing among them.

In most sectors, mobility has become business critical. Driven by an increasingly flexible and distributed workforce, the boost to productivity, and the lure of competitive advantage, enterprise mobility has taken center stage.

Enterprise mobility enables employees to work outside the office—or even at their desk—with ready access to the latest information, in real time, using the device of their choosing. In this age of information overload, any information needs to be engaging, human, and easily accessible.

That's where videoconferencing can excel. It's changing the way people interact, and is proving to be effective for online marketing, sales, and particularly communication.





Distributed Teams

The average worker telecommutes two days a month, according to Gallop, and many work away from the office even more frequently than that. A growing number of businesses are tapping into the freelance economy, engaging talent who may work across town or on the other side of the world. And some businesses have even taken a remote-first approach, with a team that's entirely virtual.

This reality is a critical factor behind enterprise mobility and, while other communication tools certainly play a role, video can meet the needs of a business in ways other tools can't match. Using high-quality audio and video to connect at a distance reduces the chance of miscommunication or misunderstanding—issues that can disrupt work and have a significant impact on productivity.

Business Travel

Videoconferencing has long been seen as a way to reduce travel expenses, gaining steam during the Great Recession. As the need increased and technology improved, the market has continued to rise; a report released by Transparency Market Research says it's expected to maintain an annual growth rate of 8.5 percent until 2023.

But videoconferencing doesn't just speed up decision making and cut costs by eliminating the need for travel. It's opened new opportunities to professionals who were once limited by the logistics of going from one place to the next. Today, using video collaboration tools, distance is no longer a factor.



Training and Human Resources

From a recruiting point of view, mobility is something many professionals have come to expect; using digital solutions can help attract and retain great talent.

However, videoconferencing has also transformed the way organizations conduct interviews, and facilitate on-boarding and employee training. Not only does video save on travel expenses, it's also significantly more scalable—and easy to record for later playback and reference.



The Reality of Shadow IT

If Management Can't Deliver, Employees Will Do It Themselves

Some companies have hesitated to fully embrace the need for flexibility due to privacy or security reasons, and not without reason. Going digital comes with inherent risk.

However, too much caution can leave an organization exposed. Ad hoc communication in the consumer market is low cost and immediately available. An organization that chooses not to invest in platforms like videoconferencing will need to accept that workers will simply use the tools they already have; they know they work, and are comfortable using them.

This additional and unpredictable layer is referred to as shadow IT.

In most cases, shadow IT stems from workers trying to stay productive. However, it puts sensitive and proprietary corporate information at risk—and the problem is likely bigger than you think. On average, a typical organization has 15 to 22 times more cloud applications running in the workplace than have been authorized by the IT department.

Getting Past Logistical Barriers

An enterprise-funded videoconferencing solution is a calculated risk, especially when technology is constantly changing. There are potential barriers to adoption—both among management and workers—which must be considered: Security, usability, and compliance.

Security Concerns

For any organization, digital security is a top priority. According to a global survey by PwC, 41 percent of respondents experienced some type of security incident over the last year, suffering financial loss, intellectual property theft, or a loss of brand reputation valuation.

In such an environment, it may seem counter-intuitive to talk about adopting another layer of digital communication. However, video-based systems deployed according to industry standards actually minimize security risks.

First, there's greater security in getting shadow IT under control, adding guidelines and policies around the use of unauthorized applications and "bring your own device" (BYOD).

Second, a high-quality system will have checks in place to protect business assets. For example, most enterprise-level video solutions automatically update to combat cyber threats in order to protect data and intellectual property.



Usability Considerations

For a long time, the growth of videoconferencing was stymied by the quality of video and compatibility of new platforms with legacy systems. While this may still apply to some solutions, today's video-based tools effectively limit bandwidth requirements to provide high-resolution video without stressing one network.

That may sound like an IT issue, but usability can have a significant impact on adoption among staff. Poor quality or slow video may suffer sluggish user adoption rates, but so will an otherwise reasonable application that doesn't sync with other tools.

If someone regularly needs access to other applications and tools just to get work done, they'll quickly find another solution. Many people will give up using a videoconferencing system if it fails to perform a handful of times—or even once.

Their alternative? Going back to the aforementioned shadow IT applications they relied on.

Regulatory Compliance

Industries such as financial services and health care are heavily regulated and any mobile systems need to be compliant. For example, health-related organizations need to ensure any communication tools meet the privacy and security requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

When highly regulated organizations adopt unified communications tools, privacy and data security compliance need to be top of mind. To manage potential compliance issues, some videoconferencing platforms target these industries specifically, and have the safeguards and encryptions needed already in place.



Implementing Video So People Will Use It



A successful rollout of a new video platform needs a well-developed implementation strategy, one that not only addresses key concerns like security and compliance issues, but which also provides for (and ensures) ease of usability, and outlines clearly how video will be incorporated into day-to-day work.

Choosing the Right Type of Deployment

Videoconferencing solutions can be deployed on-premise, through cloud-based installations (i.e., private, public, or hybrid), or by using software as a service (SaaS). SaaS solutions are growing in popularity, and are particularly popular for small-scale cloud deployments because they offer advanced technology at affordable rates.

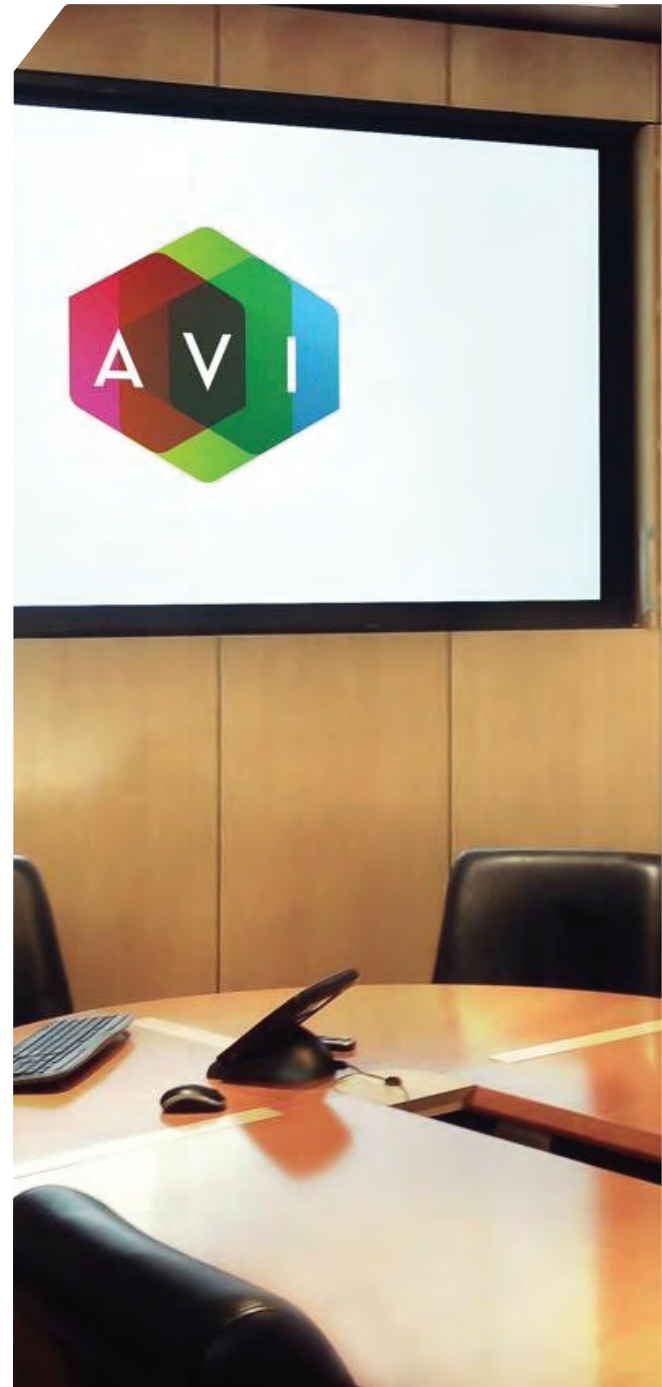
A second consideration is accessibility. For example, desktop solutions can be set up in an individual workspace or at a specific workstation. Mobile solutions let people connect regardless of location, while equipping a room for video facilitates larger group discussions. Some platforms may require secure connections, while others may prompt users for proprietary login information.

Product Capabilities

Which features are most vital to employee workflows? Features like chat, data sharing, audio, and screen sharing aren't available on every video platform. But these are the features that today's modern workforce expects. Some solutions may also offer real-time communication, asynchronous communication, or some combination of the two.

Integration

An increasing number of videoconferencing solutions are designed to integrate with other widely used tools to add to their functionality. This can pad the already available features, or make it even easier for communication to sync with other programs.





Video Adoption Success Factors for Managers

Without clear goals for productivity and use within a business' structure, a videoconferencing solution may not yield the type of ROI needed to justify the expense. Typically, these goals include efficiency, productivity, and better communication inside and outside the office. Keeping the focus on these end benefits can improve the rate of adoption over time.

However, from the beginning, any changes need to come from the top. Managers should drive the move toward incorporating video, but they should also listen to the people who will use it most frequently to understand which features and configurations will best serve their needs.

Consider Preferences from All Levels

In some situations, a lack of communication and strategic planning reduces adoption rates. As a result, the company invests in a product that doesn't fit what its employees need.

Maybe the IT department doesn't want to miss out on an emerging solution; or a CIO or CFO could limit the budget before analyzing the cost-benefit ratio? Invite enterprise-wide transparency and collaboration during the selection and rollout process. Investing in the wrong product because someone was excluded from the conversation could cost more in the long run.

Culture, Training, and Education

Many companies succeed in finding a viable solution, then fail to provide workers with the tools they need to fully adopt the new system. If you want people to use video, you need to create an environment where it becomes part of their routine.

Inspire a culture of change. Solutions need champions at every level of an organization to create excitement and lead by example. Tools on the market today will continue to evolve; embracing change and new ways to communicate help builds confidence and a willingness to pick up new habits that can further enhance productivity. Keep any messaging consistent and positive to encourage grassroots adoption.

Provide training and a bit of fun. For any technology-based tool to succeed, people need to understand why and how they should use it. Provide easy access to training resources, and consider energizing the process through gamification. Gamification is a helpful engagement tactic that uses game-like incentives to teach employees while easing the learning curve. It's not just fun and games; the principles of gamification can enhance understanding and retention rates.



Sell it well. A company that shows that a tool can offer superior value to its employees, particularly if it has a simple user experience and other clear benefits, will encourage high adoption rates after the initial push.

Integrating a new tool doesn't end with its launch. Be prepared to offer an enhanced level of support until using video becomes a natural part of how people work. Adding resources such as interactive tutorials, an internal network of approachable power users, and guidebooks can also improve the adoption process.

Leave Ad Hoc Communication Behind

Including video as part of a set of integrated communication tools is a strategic way to improve the daily work experience for employees. It can cut costs, drive productivity, boost communication and—as a result—deliver a measurable return on investment.

But offering it isn't enough to drive video adoption, and you can't rely on mandatory enforcement. Success requires a change in corporate culture, effective training, a user-friendly system, and top-down leadership that proves its value.

In today's world, companies can allow technology to drive them, or they can use technology to become a driving force in the marketplace. The difference between a smart investment and a failure lies in the commitment to using the technology, as well as its strategic application within an organization.

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By working together, we remove communication barriers instead of creating them, freeing our customers to seize opportunity, and imagine new possibilities. This is our definition of Communication Liberation, and it's reflected in the incredible diversity of AV solutions we provide for business, commercial, educational and government clients across America.