



# ANY-TO-ANY MEETINGS

## BEST PRACTICES FOR DEPLOYING SOLUTIONS WITH LIMITED DISRUPTION

The goal of “any-to-any” is connecting anything on any device, to anyone, on any platform, anywhere, at any time. It does not matter if you are using a hardware solution or new software, you need to minimize the disruption and increase the adoption by simplifying the user interface, as well as properly train employees using mediums they understand. Today’s IT administrators now face the challenge of implementing any-to-any solutions that not only include computer network access, but wireless presentation, video conferencing, and multipoint collaboration tools across different platforms.<sup>1</sup>

Most meeting spaces include a myriad of technologies such as laptops, tablets, and cell phones, combined with the local area network, the AV display system, and oftentimes conferencing. Some employees use Android phones and Windows-based laptops, while others prefer Apple or Linux, and let’s not forget file servers. Instead of offering simplicity, technologies are unfortunately making a lot of meetings more complicated. To make matters worse, users often lack training, which lowers adoption rates for collaboration solutions and contributes to meeting delays. Some users are not happy with the solutions that have been deployed and, through shadow-IT efforts, they purchase or use free consumer solutions. How do you avoid these issues while deploying any-to-any connectivity in your enterprise?

This white paper outlines several best practices that will help you avoid disruption and maximize user adoption rates when deploying any-to-any collaboration technologies.

## 1. WHEN IT COMES TO NEW SOLUTIONS, AVOID THE BIG BANG

There are basically four approaches to new technology deployment, no matter if it's a product, software, or a collaboration system:

- 'Big Bang' adoption/plunge adoption is when the entire company transfers from the old system to the new system overnight. This approach is the cheapest initially, but if it does not work, or if the users fail to adapt to the new system, the downtime may cost you more in the long run. This approach is disruptive and is not recommended.
- Phased adoption (also known as gradual conversion) is gradually transferring to a new system in different phases. This strategy is less risky than a plunge approach, but it causes the most disruptions due to it taking the most time to transfer from the old system to the new.
- Parallel adoption is a method where the old and new system run simultaneously for some period of time, and the old system is gradually disabled. The process requires careful planning and control, as well as a significant investment in labor hours.
- Pilot adoption is when the new technology is essentially tested in one location or department. It is only realistic for large organizations that have multiple locations or large, independent departments.

"With [the Pilot] approach the idea is to try out the new system in only one part of an organization. This is a popular approach when they want to evaluate the performance and qualities of the system before committing to it throughout the organization... A pilot implementation is a very good approach when there is some uncertainty about the system. The disadvantage is that it may take a long time to run the pilot which leads to higher costs and time taken up by staff to evaluate the system."<sup>ii</sup>

By using a pilot program to test your new meeting rooms, you will get real-world feedback before you implement the technology everywhere. You can leverage the "early adopters" in your enterprise and let them volunteer to be in the program. The more they learn about the systems, the more they can teach others about it. Those early adopters can become early champions of the new systems, increasing awareness and building enthusiasm.

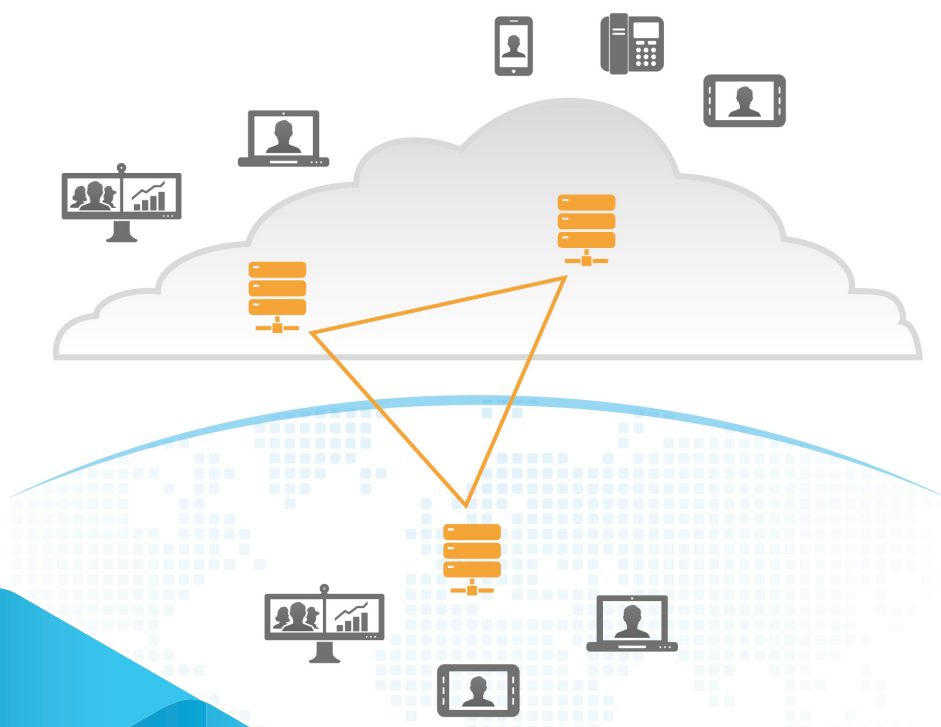
## 2. WHEN MOVING TO THE CLOUD, DON'T OVERLOOK THE HARDWARE

There are hardware and software solutions to video conferencing, and each has its pros and cons. When implementing any-to-any solutions, you have three options:

- Cloud-based: solutions 100 percent in the cloud, like GotoMeeting, BlueJeans, or Skype
- On-premise: solutions that use only hardware-based codecs, usually within the room
- Hybrid: a mix of cloud and on-premise, where some users connect using a software app

Once you've determined which route to go, you also have to consider the hardware in the room (microphone, loudspeaker, and camera) to minimize disruption and ensure user adoption. Organizations that demand the highest level of security and service quality, like financial institutions and law offices, often employ on-premise solutions. Software based codecs and cloud collaboration tools tend to be less expensive, but the quality can vary depending on the connection speed, and the hardware accessories used. The hardware matters because even though you can easily use your laptop, for example, with these solutions, a typical laptop microphone and camera are designed for use by one person. It's no wonder that the "far end" of the call cannot hear or see the group—it's not the right equipment.

No matter if you are using a huddle space or a large conference room, you should consider augmenting your system with microphones. An AV integrator



Source: Courtesy of Pexip.

can help you determine the right microphones for your specific rooms. Acoustic panels can also make a big difference in rooms with reflective or hard surfaces, and they are critical in larger conference room applications.

Today, there are more smartphones at typical meetings than laptops. Both types of users need to connect quickly. There are also power and security considerations. Are there enough outlets on your conference room table to power/recharge all of the mobile devices? Are there enough LAN outlets and/or Wi-Fi routers to accommodate all of the users in the room? Can anyone share content from any device, to anyone in the room, or anyone online? To do this properly, you may need a hybrid option that combines both cloud-based and on-premise systems to create a secure bridge where everyone can hear everyone else.

### 3. CREATE A TRAINING PROGRAM TO INCREASE USER ADOPTION

A large portion of today's workforce, especially older adults, say they need assistance when it comes to using new digital devices. Just 18 percent of older adults would feel comfortable learning to use a new technology device such as a smartphone or tablet on their own, while 77 percent indicate they would need someone to help walk them through the process.<sup>iii</sup>

No matter what age, user issues commonly center on the adoption rate of the control device in the room. Users under the pressure of a meeting room audience can't figure out how to turn on equipment or how to connect to remote participants. This can be a huge disruption to workflow and impact the mood and the efficiency of the meeting.<sup>iv</sup>

The other problem with adoption is that different people learn in different ways. Some learn best from written instructions or videos. Others need a teacher so they can ask questions. The best way to train a large group of people is using multimedia training materials that repeat the same instructions in different ways. That way each user can learn how to use the technology in their own way.

Also, make the training hands on, telling each person that their satisfaction matters. Provide written instructions, but also make simple videos they can review later. Your AV integrator can help you with the training and provide answers to those questions you may not have anticipated. Make the training more enjoyable by offering rewards like food or public praise. Some employees may still need a reference card, and that is okay as long as it helps.

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#### 4. DO THE MATH TO PREVENT FINANCIAL SURPRISES

The bottom line is the bottom line, and your conference rooms and collaboration systems affect it. However, the initial cost and the ongoing cost of technology are two very different numbers. Not only do the systems require power and support, there can also be some hidden costs when the users fail to adapt to a new system, or when meetings are delayed or double-booked. Proper room scheduling and asset management software can help you to optimize the spaces that you currently have, but how do you figure out your budget for the next 5 to 10 years?

You need a systematic method to avoid disruption and maximize adoption. So instead of choosing the solutions based on your own opinion of what is best, you should first ask the user base about their needs and wants. You may not be able to provide everything they need all at once, but by surveying them for feedback, they know their input is valued.

It's important to figure out what is working, as well as what room sizes are working best. An AV solution provider can help you to build a technology roadmap, including an annual budget. They can also help you build the reports decision makers need for purchasing and planning—including information about future costs and savings.

#### 5. WORK WITH AN AV INTEGRATOR TO DEPLOY ANY-TO-ANY COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS

Working with an AV integrator like AVI Systems gives you access to the expertise and experience gained from hundreds of enterprise and mid-market deployments. They understand the security challenges of connecting mobile devices and remote employees, and they have the breadth of knowledge needed to understand your hybrid solution needs. They can make different systems work together with unified control, including local hardware, and cloud-based collaboration tools.

AV integrators are focused on user experiences, so they can design and program user interfaces that get adopted more quickly. They can help you to implement company-wide room usage and monitoring solutions and help you to build pilot programs that will give you real world feedback on your upcoming conference room needs.

An integrator will minimize risk and prevent disruption while combining the right hardware with the right software, training, and support to create the best possible solution for your company.

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AND WANTS.

## NEXT STEPS

When you are ready to discuss the needs of your meeting room spaces, please contact AVI Systems or complete [this simple form](#) that will help you to start the needs assessment process. Together, we can help you to build a technology roadmap and provide the right solutions that meet the needs of your company and still fit your budget.

To learn more about solutions for mobile device use into your meeting rooms, contact AVI Systems at 952-949-3700.

## ABOUT AVI SYSTEMS

Founded in 1974, AVI Systems is currently the nation's fourth-largest AV solutions provider, and the only 100% employee-owned one.

Our success owes in great part to having the most highly credentialed, capable and motivated work force in the AV industry. The strength of our process, the unparalleled support we offer, and our conviction that technology should liberate, not impede, are also foundational to our success.

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.

## SOURCES

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