



7 ways video collaboration builds a competitive advantage

How video conferencing boosts innovation, productivity, and time to market.

“As a customer, to have a person there with a face that allows you to read non-verbals, to develop rapport and trust, and see whether they appear to be engaged with the problem, can make all the difference.”

- **Jeffrey Polzer**,
*UPS Foundation Professor
of Human Resource
Management at Harvard
Business School*

In today’s global economy, the ability to innovate and bring products to market quickly is imperative. Companies must collaborate and communicate seamlessly to avoid costly errors and bottlenecks that lead to market misfires. Businesses can lessen the likelihood of such missteps by implementing video collaboration tools.

The availability of low-cost technology – including high-quality video conferencing equipment, high-bandwidth networks, and user-friendly applications and tools – is bringing video collaboration within reach of today’s workforce.

Video enables managers, knowledge workers, salespeople, and customer-service employees to better convey and understand information that is being shared within projects or engagements. As a result, companies can act more quickly on new ideas and bring them to market faster with a higher degree of quality and customer input.

Here are seven ways video collaboration helps companies gain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace:

1 Smaller travel budgets

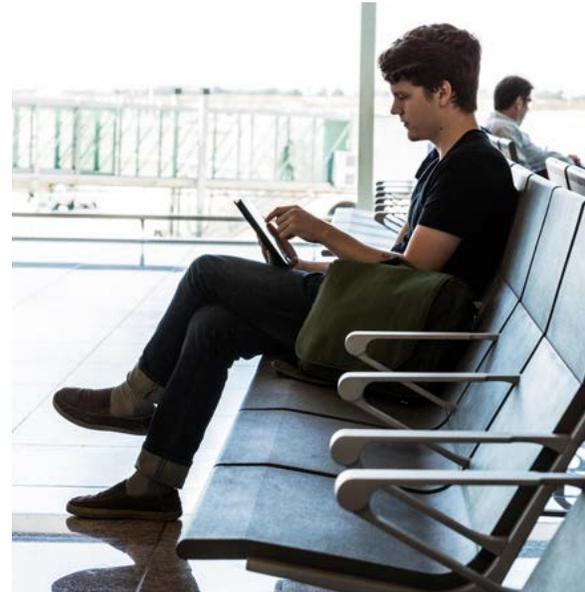
Reliable, user-friendly video conferencing enables face-to-face experiences with colleagues and clients around the world without incurring travel expenses. For instance, GHD, an engineering, architecture, and environmental consulting company, uses video communication for collaboration among 5,500 employees across five continents. Video conferencing allows the company to *“decrease travel costs, as well as improve productivity overall, by giving employees more time to do meaningful work,”* said Elizabeth Harper, Chief Information Officer at GHD.

2 Accelerated workflows

Video collaboration can reduce workflow bottlenecks. The ability to interact in real time enables on-the-spot problem solving instead of email chains and phone calls. It also reduces the chances of misinterpretation or miscommunication to improve decision making. The efficiencies created by more direct interaction between co-workers means employees can focus on their core tasks.

3 Faster innovation benefits

Video collaboration accelerates innovation and speed-to-market. The ability to streamline communication and increase turnaround of workflow documents can reduce product-development time by 25% – or cut it by more than one day a week.¹ Innovation often is the product of brainstorming sessions. Innovation leaders rely on collaborative exchanges to identify, develop, and operationalize new solutions. Videos can replicate this togetherness across global channels, drawing in expertise from anywhere across the world.



¹ CIO and Box, *The New World of Collaboration*, 2014:

http://resources.idgenterprise.com/original/AST-0120112_BoxWPcons0712_FINAL.pdf

4 Language barriers lessened

Many video communication tools include translation-on-demand capabilities, which is critical for companies expanding into global markets. A Cisco survey found that 94% of organizations value video as a way to break down language barriers in an increasingly global marketplace. This benefit extends to customers, as well. Providing real-time face-to-face services using video collaboration anywhere is revolutionizing many industries and provides businesses with a competitive advantage by making it feasible to offer more personalized services.

For example, hospitals are able to better serve patients who have a limited proficiency in English.

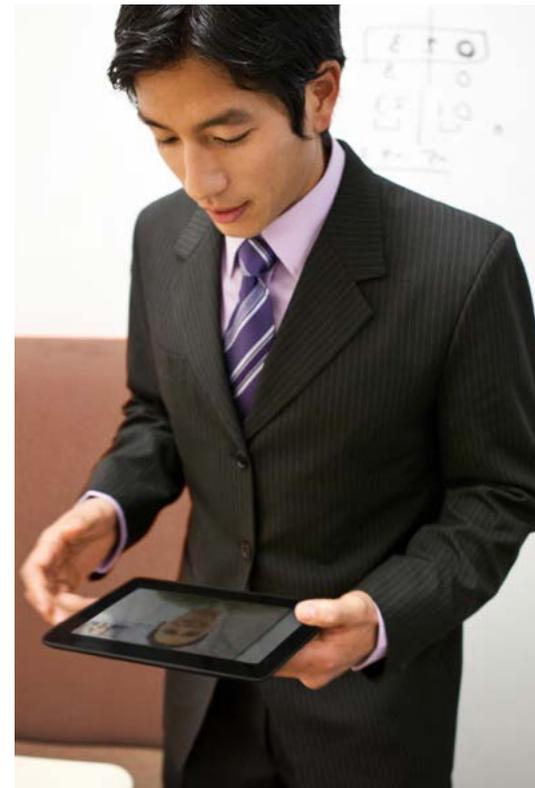
“Those with good, quality interpretation are positioning themselves to be the provider of choice for larger and larger portions of the community,” said Melinda Paras, President of Paras and Associates, which implemented video conferencing capabilities across 45 healthcare facilities.

5 Higher employee retention, productivity

Another advantage of video collaboration is the ability to record and archive meetings or events for training purposes. Video-driven learning and development improves employee engagement, morale, and alignment, which can lead to increased productivity and higher retention. Video communication also offers a more immediate medium for knowledge sharing, which can be especially helpful in complex or fast-moving markets. A typical knowledge management system includes PowerPoint decks with bullet points, pictures, and diagrams, or reports.

“These videos are much more effective at conveying information and transferring expertise,” said Jeffrey Polzer, UPS Foundation Professor of Human Resource Management at Harvard Business School.

“Instead of just having a text-based quote, a student can watch the protagonist through a video. They can see and hear how they speak, and determine for themselves whether the speakers are trustworthy or inspiring.”



6 Supercharged customer service

Video enables face-to-face customer communication on a global scale. Customers often stay with or switch their service provider due to customer service, according to a recent Accenture survey.²

“As a customer, to have a person there with a face that allows you to read non-verbals, to develop rapport and trust, and see whether they appear to be engaged with the problem, can make all the difference,” Polzer said.

Several prominent companies, such as American Express, now offer apps that engage customers in video collaboration with customer-service representatives.



7 Better sales-conversion rates

Video-aided B2B salespeople moved an average of 20% of their video collaboration contacts to a sales funnel, according to an Aberdeen report. The average deal size was more than \$500,000, Aberdeen’s survey of 380 enterprises found.³

² Accenture, *Accenture 2013 Global Consumer Pulse Survey*, www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Accenture-Global-Consumer-Pulse-Research-Study-2013-Key-Findings.pdf

³ Aberdeen Group, *The ROI of Video Collaboration*, 2011

The path to video collaboration

Effective video collaboration depends on the level of the engagement across the organization, the video quality and the solution's user-friendliness. Organizations must gauge the needs of each stakeholder to determine how to apply video collaboration tools appropriately across the enterprise.

Organizations should ask themselves the following questions:

- **Where are the pain points within operations or processes that video can address?**
- **Are key departments, including IT, on board with supporting a video environment?**
- **Will mobile fit into this new environment?**

In addition, low video quality may detract from the messages participants are attempting to convey.

“The problem is that video quality varies dramatically,” explained Polzer. “If there’s a little bit of lag time, or there’s some interference, it can really disrupt the conversation, and it has some lingering effects that might be attributed to the other person, even unconsciously.”

Video collaboration tools also lose their effectiveness if they are difficult to use. The latest generation of tools, platforms and services enable rapid integration of video communications into key applications, training resources, project management, customer service and web applications.

Making video collaboration as easy as one click to connect with a subject matter expert or a team member can accelerate business results and enhance organization culture.



Conclusion: video boosts productivity, cuts costs

Video enhances communication and collaboration across the entire enterprise. It reduces or eliminates travel costs and opens new opportunities for business growth through faster product launches, increased productivity and accelerated innovation.

Video also encourages new ways of working that connect virtual teams and complex environments. Breakthrough results come when businesses engage their employees to brainstorm, innovate, establish strong relationships, share ideas and knowledge, negotiate and inspire.



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