

Seven tips for choosing the right video, audio collaboration partner

It seems businesses large and small are coming round to the idea of using video conferencing as an effective and efficient business communications tool. This shift has partly been driven by the popularity of consumer video technologies like Skype, which are allowing people to communicate face-to-face across different geographies and time zones, in a cost-effective, efficient and social manner.

 By [Selvin Kristnen](#) 3 Jul 2013

There has therefore never been a better time to look at video collaboration technologies, but how do you decide on the best option for your business?

Here are some guidelines to consider when making this decision:

- **Issue:** Just because an application is free to download, it doesn't mean that anyone can enter a video call on it for free. Although many vendors offer free mobile video conferencing apps in the iTunes and Google Play stores, they don't allow immediate startup - users often have to undergo a complex setup and licensing process - even for casual or on-time-only users.

Solution: Choose a video solution that is both freely distributable and does not require a user-specific license key.

- **Issue:** If users can't easily join a call, they may not join at all. Many vendors' solutions require downloads, complex licensing and registration - and often the support of a local IT team to assist. In addition, some video solutions require separate audio or video hardware - an expensive proposition at best.

Solution: Choose a video solution which offers a click/call setup - and make sure it leverages your current device audio/video.

- **Issue:** The benefits of video conferencing have to be available to all, not just a select few. A number of mobile and desktop apps offered today are based on proprietary technologies. Only standards-based solutions enable users to connect to other vendors' standards-based systems (unless you add gateways and get a little creative). Proprietary solutions limit connectivity to others, and gateways can add latency and produce a lower quality experience.

Solution: Choose only open-standards-based video solutions.

Issue: If employees can't take advantage of audio, video and data-sharing, it's not really collaboration. It's important to select a solution that enables users to join by audio, video and share content - and ensures all three are available on any device, whether the employee is in a conference room, at their desk or on the go. If any of these three components isn't available, the quality of the experience is limited and collaboration is compromised.

Solution: Select only solutions that allow audio, video, and content sharing to ensure a full user experience.

Issue: How can organisations ensure they're taking advantage of the latest technologies - and future proof their investment? The latest technologies don't matter if the solution doesn't leverage them. For instance, protocols such as H.264 SVC help to deliver a great video experience even over "lossy" networks. And it's important to ensure that the solution is able to support calls over the public internet as well as private networks.

Solution: Find a solution that will ensure that the call quality remains as good as possible regardless of bandwidth availability and changes in bandwidth during a call.

- It's not cloud-based just because it has the word "cloud" in its name. There are viable solutions offered in the market from companies that don't wish to invest extensively in any systems, by trusted service providers.
- **Solution:** Make sure you are investing in a proven video solution that is offered either on-premises or through trusted service providers.

I hope this information has been insightful and will aid you in making the best decision for your organisation, regardless of size. There has never been a better time to look at video conferencing. Video is no longer a place to which you go, involving a high-end set-up and guy from IT on stand-by in case things go wrong. Rather, video today is a thing that you do. And this is where video really moves into the mainstream and we start to see the true democratisation of the technology.

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