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Less Hassle. Better Meetings.
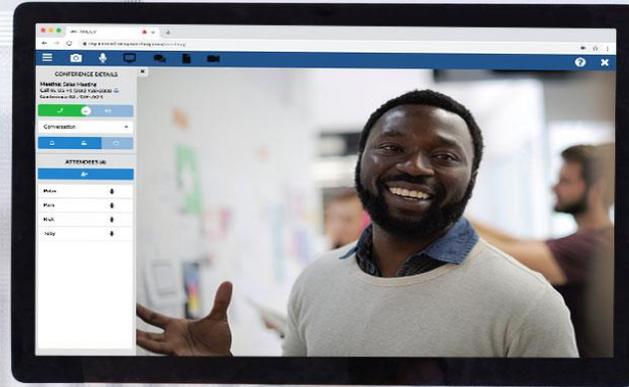
7 REASONS VIDEO CONFERENCING WILL BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS

Since the dawn of human history, we've invented better and more efficient ways to communicate with one another, particularly over distances. From smoke signals and handwritten letters to telegraphs, intercontinental telephone calls, and the internet, technology has continuously advanced to let us share information no matter where we are in relation to one another.

The increased potency and availability of mass communications technology has enabled an increasingly global workforce. It isn't too long ago that even large businesses that shipped goods all around the world had to connect with global counterparts through slow "snail mail," prohibitively expensive international phone calls, or even more expensive transnational flights. These days, a director of operations based in Austin can connect with her supplier in Hanoi and request changes with a simple email.

For enterprise professionals, the many benefits to these newfound communications tools are obvious. But with benefits come challenges, too. Many larger companies that do business around the world maintain offices in multiple countries, so that these transnational communiques aren't going to vendors or clients, but people who are, in theory, colleagues.

How can managers and executives at international enterprises make sure that their employees from Dublin to Santa Monica feel like they're all on the same team? How do you foster a consistent company culture or high-morale environment in a world where sizable portions of your team are located around the nation, or even the planet, when they aren't chatting at the water cooler or grabbing a drink after work?

One communications tool any enterprise should consider adopting — if it hasn't already — is video conferencing.

In this ebook, we'll examine some of the key reasons video conferencing can be a crucial benefit to any business, but particularly large ones. Whether it's 24/7 support helping your employees at offices around the world, white-labeled branding helping integrate your video solution with your business' critically important brand, or a single solution that works just as well for one-on-one calls as it does for one-to-hundreds webinars, video conferencing is a tool that can help your enterprise today

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MODERN WORKPLACES REQUIRE MODERN SOLUTIONS

There's a reason that most businesses adopt new technology, and it isn't just because they're run by technophiles; technology helps improve productivity and makes things easier for managers and employees alike. Electronic access fobs are quicker than keys. Digital filing systems are more convenient (and take up less space) than massive rows of filing cabinets. You don't move to the cloud for the sake of being in the cloud, you move to the cloud because it provides services your business needs.

Similarly, video conferencing addresses very real challenges experienced by increasingly many organizations — first and foremost among them an increasingly remote workforce. This includes having teams or members or consultants around the world, as previously mentioned, but that's just the start. It's normal in the modern global business world to have vendors or parts of your supply chain in other countries, and video conferencing helps you get to know them in an invaluable way that a phone call or email can't replicate.

It isn't just a matter of globalization, either: The modern workforce is one that underlined increasingly values remote work, both in the context of short-term "working from home" or long-term arrangements with permanent offsite workers. Say your business is headquartered in Seattle, but you've just acquired a team of SEO marketing experts in upstate New York. In the past, your new SEO team members would have to choose between their new jobs and the affordable lifestyle they love, but the beauty of a modern, digital workplace is that now they can have both. Your new marketing team doesn't have to fly out to Seattle to be active participants in meetings; they can join them easily over computer or phone.

Not only does this benefit applicants who don't have to relocate for their next job, an increasingly remote workforce gives businesses more hiring options, dramatically expanding the pool of talented candidates. Video conferencing helps make this a feasible reality.

VIDEO CONFERENCING SAVES MONEY, INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY, AND MAKES TEAMS MORE EFFICIENT

In the world before video conferencing, your business would have been on the hook, financially, for your New York team's airfare and hotel fees every time they flew into Seattle to attend a meeting — or the gas and moving expenses if they relocated permanently.

Virtual conferencing spaces ultimately save time and money for employer and employee alike. Even if neither you nor your employees ever plan on traveling for business — an unlikely prospect, particularly for a larger company — remote work can be a tremendous boost to productivity. An employee will never be late to work because they got held up in traffic; if you've sprained your ankle and can't walk, you can comfortably work from home, recuperating while not stressing over letting work pile up.

Online video meetings mean that while you and your employees are working from wherever you can find a good internet connection, you can still stay in touch and communicate face to face.

WebRTC, Browser-Based Video Simplifies the Process

The benefits outlined above are shared through any video conferencing solution, but special note must be given to Web Real-Time Communication, or WebRTC. This open-source project makes it possible to have high-quality, real-time video communication directly inside a browser without downloading any additional software.

While downloading video conferencing software is hardly an onerous hurdle, it is an additional step, and any additional complexity increases the odds that something might go wrong. Those odds are multiplied when dealing with large groups, as every new person on the team is an additional opportunity for something to go wrong — especially in an environment where Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies are increasingly common, even in large corporations.

Rather than investing in a solution for your business that requires everyone involved to download an app, consider adopting a WebRTC-based tool for maximum efficiency.

VIDEO CONFERENCING MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO QUICKLY SHARE INFORMATION WITH LARGE GROUPS

In the past, when company higher-ups wanted to talk to a workforce directly, they were limited by the physical size of auditoriums or how many people could dial in to a conference call. As companies got bigger and transnational, the ability for a CEO to make company-wide announcements in person drastically diminished. From new employee orientation to hiring or retirement news or announcements of new initiatives, this mass communication had to be impersonal by necessity — or relayed through management.

What's more, if there was ever any information being disseminated other than what was communicated through voice, it required additional work and resources. Imagine printing out a thousand copies of a document, stapling it all together, and disseminating it to staff. That's a lot of money spent on something that employees might not spend much time reading!

The power of a modern video solution is that not only does it allow participants to chat with one another face to face, or for presenters to broadcast to hundreds or even thousands of attendees at once, it also typically serves as a media ecosystem in its own right. In other words, these solutions offer functionality beyond what you would find in a phone call or email.

Screen Sharing: Broadcasting your computer screen to anyone watching, this is fantastic for training large groups of employees simultaneously or for sales reps walking prospective customers through demos.

File Sharing: Whether it's sending a file to one person or sharing it with a thousand, file-sharing features make it easy for people to be on the same page without ever needing to chop down a single tree or buy staples in bulk.

Presentations: Many video conferencing solutions offer integrations directly with programs like PowerPoint, so that you can have the same experience presenting to your teams or clients around the world as you would someone in your conference room.

Videos: Many prominent video conferencing solutions also offer the ability to play videos natively in the client, which is fantastic for, say, sharing the video pitch for your company's newest product, ensuring that the entire company is able to quickly get on the same page in terms of branding and messaging.

Recording: One understated benefit of video conferencing and webinars is that a good solution will record the session so that it can be shared and watched at a later date. This is fantastic for enterprises, when large meetings may be difficult to fit into people's schedules, especially with worldwide employees.

Even if some of your employees are sound asleep in the middle of the night in their time zone, you can still hold the meeting as scheduled — and those employees can watch it during the day without missing anything. This is particularly excellent for training purposes.

VIDEO CONFERENCING SOLUTIONS SUPPORT A BUSINESS'S BRAND LIKE NOTHING ELSE

Leadership at large companies tends to understand how critical branding is to a business' success. It's hardly an exaggeration to say that a business is its brand. The importance of branding makes it somewhat surprising that the most common methods of communication, both within an organization and to external partners, tend to be barely branded at all.

Consider a conference call; other than perhaps some customized music, what differentiates your business' investor call from the others? When you send an email to a supplier, they read it on their email client, and so the only branding, if any, would be in your signature.

Unlike other methods of mass communication, a video conferencing solution can be integrated properly with the branding you use everywhere else, for both internal and external use. In this way, you'll be reinforcing your business' brand every time you host a webinar or video chat.

WHITE-LABELING

Particularly useful for team members involved in sales, a good video conferencing platform will support some degree of white-labeling — that is, allowing your organization to brand the experience as if it were your own. This can involve things like a custom domain URL, your own unique color pallet or logos seamlessly integrated into the experience, and so on.

Ideally, your video conferencing solution will be completely integrated with your business' branding in a way that never feels obtrusive, but rather natural and organic. This reinforces your brand when you interact with clients, vendors, distributors, and even your own internal staff. Your virtual meeting space can be as much a part of your team as your office's conference rooms.

APIs

The best video conferencing software supports APIs that allow it to be fully integrated with the rest of your business and the applications you already use. For instance, when using a browser-based, WebRTC-powered solution like MegaMeeting, you can launch branded sessions directly from your business' website, giving your site some extra functionality and ensuring that anyone you're communicating with will be firmly in your brand ecosystem from start to finish.

It's also vitally important that any video conferencing software be able to integrate with the other applications that are critical to how any modern enterprise functions, like Google Calendar, the Microsoft Office 365 suite, and others. A cleverly integrated video platform will be a natural, organic addition to how your organization already works. In an enterprise, this can save hundreds upon hundreds of person-hours in terms of requiring additional training.

Being able to introduce new customers or employees, wherever they are in the world, into your brand ecosystem in a way that you could never do over the phone is an underrated benefit of video conferencing.

WEBINARS ARE PERFECT FOR ONE-TO-MANY SCENARIOS

As discussed in the previous section, video conferencing solutions make it easy for groups to share information with each other, but many online video conferences will only support a few dozen attendees at the most. This may not be enough to see the results a larger enterprise needs: To quickly reach out to hundreds or thousands of viewers, an enterprise needs to use webinars.

Not all video conferencing solutions support webinars; some require you to download and use a different program entirely from the one you use for your normal video conferences. But if your video conferencing platform does let you host webinars, you should heavily consider taking advantage of that functionality.

Whatever your enterprise's industry or field of work, there are many fantastic uses for webinars:

WEBINARS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

If your business is an online software-as-a-service (SaaS), you could have weekly or biweekly webinars where you teach your customers about how to take advantage of some underutilized elements of your offering. Alternatively, you can use the webinar to position you and your business as a thought leader, teaching viewers about your field, even if it only has a tangential relationship to what you sell. For instance, a biotech company might hold a webinar about major recent breakthroughs in their field, even if they're not made by its own employees.

As training is, in essence, internal education, it should come as no surprise that webinars are excellent for teaching your employees something you'd like them all to know — especially for large companies that can't feasibly squeeze every employee into one room, or even one building!

Perhaps you've just adopted a new SaaS tool that you want your workers to be comfortable with. Perhaps you're instituting a new policy, and you want to make sure your global workforce is all on the same page so that there isn't a disconnect between offices that use the tool and offices that have yet to adopt it. You can also use webinars to educate and train your distributors around the world, which is paramount in the launch of a new product.

A webinar is the perfect way to get your workforce all on the same page at the same time.

WEBINARS FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

The webinar is quickly becoming an alternative to, or even a replacement for, the typical annual or quarterly shareholder meeting or phone call. This technology marries the mass communication of a conference call with the multimedia capabilities we discussed in point #3.

Beyond shareholder meetings, a webinar can be used whenever your company has a major announcement you'd like the entire staff to be there for, like introducing a new executive or announcing the acquisition of another organization. While these could, again, be performed over email, the visual touch adds a dimension that rarely comes out over text.

WEBINARS FOR SALES

Webinars, much like small-group video conferences, are a fantastic tool for sales representatives in any industry. They're particularly excellent for industries that benefit from taking the time to demonstrate the ins and outs of a product, like software or professional services.

While this does lose the personal touch of a one-on-one demo, the webinar medium allows you to reach a wider audience, and also turns the webinar into a resource that you can send other prospective customers after the fact.

Most of the top video conferencing solutions also support recording webinars, allowing things like trainings to be saved and repurposed for later use

VIDEO CONFERENCING HELPS REMOTE IT WORKERS
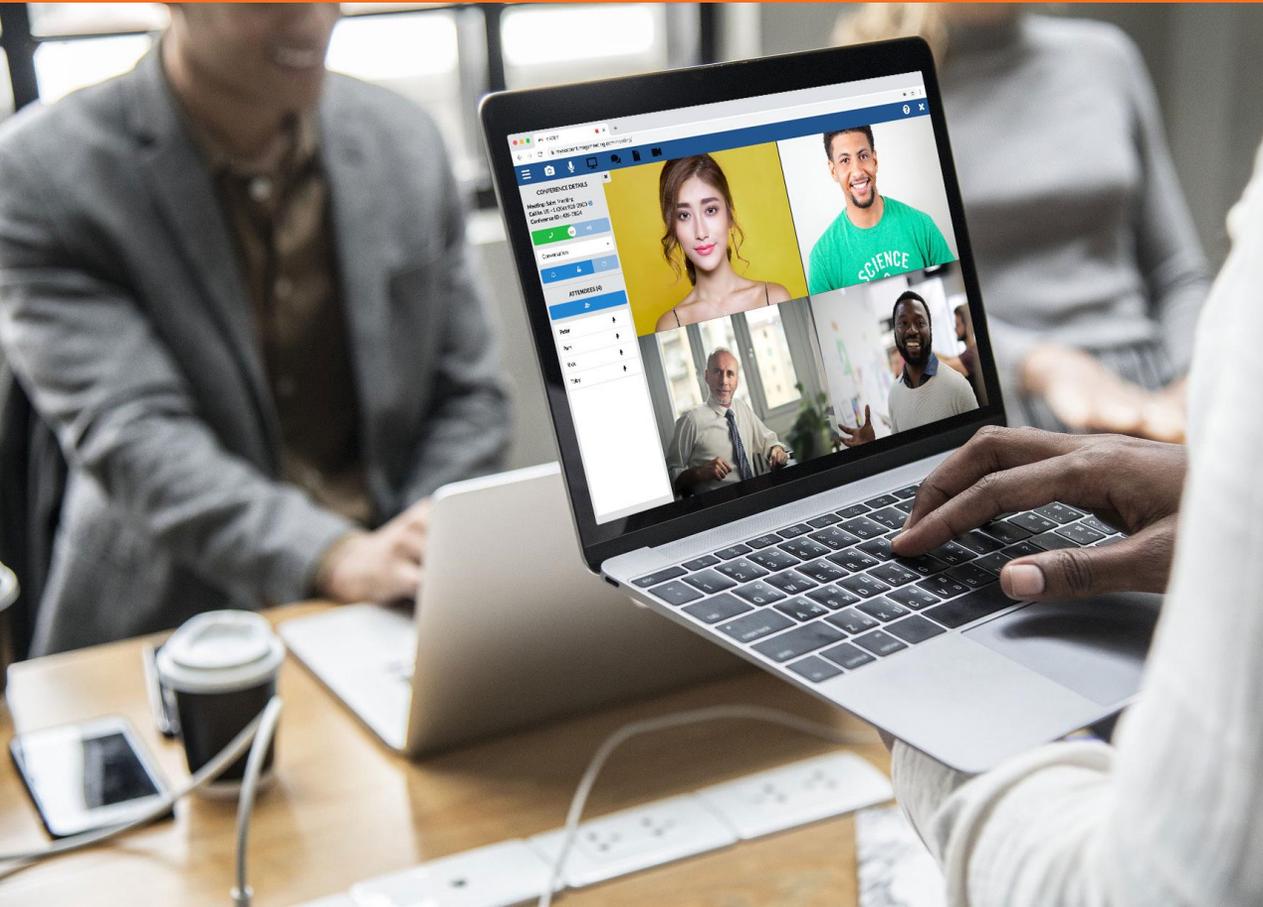
Imagine you've just opened a new sales office in Singapore, but the office isn't large enough to warrant its own full-time IT staff yet, so any tech support is coming from your Sydney office. This is a scenario that would've been unthinkable just ten years ago, but is now very much a reality for companies as work moves increasingly to the cloud. However, if there is any confusion between the employee with a problem and their offsite IT support, things can quickly become frustrating.

Before, this might have been carried out over a phone call, where all information had to be shared verbally, and as such was vulnerable to normal human miscommunication. In an analog world, it was difficult to keep all parties on the same page, but video conferencing — in particular, the ability to share screens — makes this much less of a hassle. You can even maintain a central IT help center that assists all of your employees around the world, if you'd prefer.

VIDEO COMMUNICATION IS THE MOST NATURAL WAY TO CHAT

Have you ever misread the tone of a friend or coworker's text message or email and assumed they were implying something that they never meant to say? There's so much information contained in things like the tone of our voices that is stripped out whenever we communicate solely by text, and as a result, it can be easy for a message that is intended to be polite and professional to be read as distant or aloof.

Even voice communication, on its own, is missing critical information. As humans, we naturally communicate not just with our words and tone of voice, but with our entire bodies. Nonverbal communication like facial expressions and body language are critical elements in how we convey information to one another, so much so that communicating without them almost invariably feels like something is being missed.

Context cues from nonverbal communication help us be better managers, employees, and coworkers. For instance, if a website programmer feels he has too much on his plate to take on this next project but is reluctant to say so outright, you might be able to see this in his body language and expressions, letting you adjust his workload or hand the assignment to someone else so he won't be overwhelmed.

That's something that's possible with video conferencing — even if said programmer is across the country — that you just won't find in text- or audio-based formats.

This also helps in building a human connection with people you may be meeting for the first time. It's always a positive development to be able to put a face to someone's name and voice, and whether you're speaking with a prospective new vendor, partner, or customer, adding this extra element of humanity can make you — and them — more than just a name on the screen.

EXPERIENCING THE VALUE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Ultimately, video conferencing should be a key part of any organization's toolbox. With its ability to help a business save money, boost productivity, connect workers all around the country and the globe, and help employees and managers and people outside your organization interact in a natural, human manner, video conferencing is a modern solution for a truly modern workplace.

MegaMeeting is a particularly great tool for large companies with multiple offices, thanks to offering much of what we've previously discussed, like 24/7 support for employees around the globe, a single platform for both video conferencing and webinars, white-labeled branding and customizable, flexible API integrations, and more. It's a perfect solution for an enterprise who needs a better way of communicating with employees, clients, shareholders, vendors, and more.

At MegaMeeting, we'd love to help your enterprise take the first steps into exploring the world of video conferencing — or, if you're not happy with your current video conferencing solution, help you find a better option. If you've been convinced that video conferencing is an excellent fit for your organization's needs, contact MegaMeeting today.

www.megameeting.com