

CIO



The CIO's Role in the Move to 'Pervasive Video'

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Most CIOs recognise the benefits of videoconferencing in the enterprise, knowing they could lower their corporate travel costs, increase employee productivity, and improve business agility. But there are even greater gains to be made from the pervasive use of videoconferencing and telepresence, experts have found.

Videoconferencing is starting to become more popular in the enterprise. In a survey of more than 2,700 ICT decision-makers, analyst firm Ovum found that half or more of large businesses have deployed room-based videoconferencing, desktop videoconferencing or both. More than a quarter of those that have not deployed plan to do so in the next year.

Chris Nunn, Head of Business Unit - Communications, Dimension Data, comments that today, there is a rapid shift towards pervasive video. Networks are expanding to include 3G and 4G connections, and employees are starting to use wireless options. Videoconferences themselves are also transitioning by moving away from traditional meeting rooms, to video available on laptops, tablets and smartphones, and via a proliferation of possible software clients. In addition, the people we connect with are no longer only colleagues. We are also seeing an increase in video calls with clients and partners in the supply chain; as well as connections to home workers and mobile workers in the field. According to Nunn, the whole video landscape is therefore different from what it was.

Donald McLaughlin, Director of UKI Collaboration, Cisco, says pervasive video is about making the solutions available to everyone within the organisation, as well as businesses of all sizes. Once that happens, then those organisations can extend the solutions to their external supply chain in order to speed up the decision-making process and shorten time-to-market for new products and services. This is where the true value of pervasive video lies.

Dimension Data is seeing a desire in its clients to make pervasive video part of [their 'workplace of the future' strategy](#). This is because video can help people to work wherever they are, and whenever they want to, and lower the cost of corporate real estate, says Nunn.

Video is already seeing greater adoption in specific applications. Human Resources departments are using it to interview applicants, while training organisations harness videoconferencing to provide instruction to a wide range of workers.

Contact centres are beginning to let customers speak with agents over video. Video has also established itself in a wide range of applications for specific industries, such as healthcare (telemedicine), education (distance learning), banking (virtual teller and visual expert kiosk), hospitality (virtual concierge), and public sector (video arraignments and visitations).

Nunn adds that CIOs should look at all of the options available on the market, and particularly cloud-based solutions. He adds that Dimension Data and Cisco have a very long-standing partnership in this space, and have built a Telepresence-as-a-Service (TPaaS) model, which helps ensure a consistent user experience globally, enable users to call inside and outside of their network regardless of device, scale video support and management without increasing business risk, and ultimately deliver the benefits and return on investment on the video solutions..

Users are central to the success of videoconferencing. If employees don't use it, then they, their colleagues, their clients – and consequently the business as a whole – won't derive any of the benefits that the technology was purchased to deliver.

Usage and adoption will always be one of the biggest challenges with video, and it has to be quick to set up and easy to use, says Nunn. Driving usage and adoption is an ongoing programme to ensure that employees can get the best out of it, and can extend it beyond just internal face-to-face meetings and information sharing.

The next steps for CIOs, says McLaughlin, are to reinforce the business benefits of driving pervasive video across the organisation; and to drive the cultural change within the business which is where we are going to see the real impact.

With the right strategy, technology and culture, videoconferencing and telepresence can help enterprises to cut operational costs, gain new efficiencies, and grab the competitive edge. ■

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