

Seven technology considerations for today's web-enabled meetings

A web conference is only as good as the technology that enables it to happen. Here are seven necessary technologies to help ensure end users can take full advantage of web conferencing, from wherever they happen to be.

1. MOBILITY

Mobile usage continues to grow, and with it, users demand to be able to use personal devices. And it's not just BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) anymore—it's also BYOA (Bring Your Own App). Users need to know they have the ability to communicate and collaborate remotely under almost any conditions, whatever the technology, the distance, or the environment may be.

Considerations:

The ability to support multiple personal devices may require too many IT resources to be feasible. A mobile strategy helps address which mobile devices will be supported, which apps are needed, and how to provision security for each supported device.

2. SOUND

You cannot underestimate the importance of sound quality when it comes to virtual meetings. Large spaces tend to make speakerphone conversations all but impossible for virtual attendees to understand. And background noise introduced by virtual participants can quickly derail a meeting. If the meeting participants are not intelligible to each other, their level of frustration mounts as the level of productivity plummets.

Considerations:

Poor acoustics in a conference room can often be offset by echo-canceling speakerphones. For those calling in, wideband supported headsets with noise-canceling microphones are essential. And the ability for those who are not speaking to mute their microphone helps make the conference call much more intelligible—and productive.

3. VIDEO

Videoconferencing is being increasingly adopted around the world, and seen as an indispensable tool for bringing people together. Successful implementations enable people to view and interact with each other seamlessly, with no apparent barriers.

Considerations:

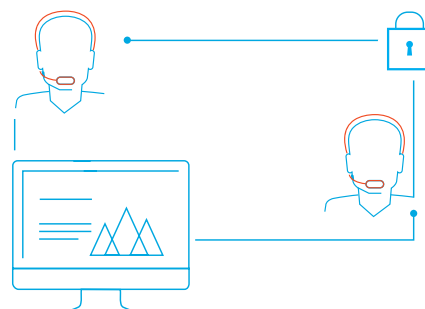
The ability to integrate videoconferencing with unified communications helps to provide greater flexibility for staff, giving them the ability to host, schedule, and join conferences while offsetting the need for additional hardware.

4. NETWORK CAPACITY

The goal is to make every virtual meeting look, sound, and feel as natural as possible—but to do it successfully requires the right network capacity. A bad connection can significantly affect meeting productivity.

Considerations

To accommodate the demands for HD video and audio quality, dedicated high-speed bandwidth is required. Reliability with minimal latency is critical to maximize uptime across all video endpoints, conference bridges, and firewalls. At the same time, it's important to inform remote users about best practices in wi-fi, to help ensure, for example, that upload and download speeds are sufficient to accommodate the demands of a web conferencing tool.



5. SECURITY

To help ensure a secure environment, strict security protocols need to be in place for data transmission and data storage.

Considerations:

Choose wireless products with security features built in, for example, encryption and the latest DECT security standards. Headsets with noise-canceling microphones help reduce the transmission of private side conversations.

6. INTEROPERABILITY

Unified communications by definition creates a need to implement multiple software, hardware, and networking technologies. Helping to ensure compatibility among these technologies can be a significant challenge.

Considerations:

The International Multimedia Telecommunications Consortium provides the industry with implementation guidelines, such as interoperability best practices and pre-testing.

7. HOSTING, SERVICE, AND SUPPORT

To help ensure maximum uptime, universal access, and ease of deployment, more companies are choosing managed services and hosting for greater flexibility and scalability.

Considerations:

Outsourcing helps provide greater IT bench strength by offering services such as 24/7 global customer support, guaranteed uptime, and training when required. To explore best practices and key insights in planning, deploying, and adopting a UC solution, view the Plantronics UC Toolkit [here](#).