

# TAKING UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS FURTHER

## Synopsis

**Unified Communications (UC) can transform meeting rooms into efficient collaboration spaces. However, when not used to its full potential, UC can cost more time and money than it saves. This paper presents solutions that will help you understand how to overcome the most common issues – incompatibility, high cost, and a complicated user interface – to increase collaboration and productivity across businesses of all sizes.**

## Establishing Unified Communications

Unified Communications (UC) and collaborative tools are in the early stages of becoming mainstream. Once the reserve of only the biggest businesses, UC solutions are now being introduced to the meeting rooms of large and medium companies to increase connectivity across a range of equipment, software, and services.

By the end of 2013, over 70% of large businesses had deployed between five and seven collaborative tools<sup>1</sup>. This steady growth can be attributed to UC's most valuable recent addition – video meeting enablers.

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The pressure on decision makers to make UC – and specifically video conferencing – even more integral, by implementing it into meeting rooms of all sizes, is increasing. Yet for the average large business, justifying the cost of a complete UC system for use across an entire business can be a challenge; finding one that scales to their every requirement is even harder.

## The value of communication

A 2014 study by Information Week found that 64% of organisations make UC available to less than half of their employees<sup>2</sup>, for reasons this report will explore. For most businesses, the ability to scale video conferencing to meeting rooms will make or break the decision to invest in UC.

The desire is for a video conferencing system that is scalable and cost-effective enough to be integrated in meeting rooms of any size, and simple enough that productivity isn't sacrificed by complex operation. Such a system could encourage wider application of UC, increase customer satisfaction by up to 23%, and raise productivity by up to 12.5%<sup>2</sup>.

## Interoperability shouldn't be an issue for businesses

The ideal video meeting solution will be one that seamlessly integrates with a business' existing UC system, as well as any professional or consumer apps that partners or employees may favour for their internal and external communications.

However, this isn't always possible because many vendors offer video communication solutions that don't operate alongside existing networks. Information Week found that, when allowed to choose more than one vendor, respondents considered there to be a number of leaders in the UC market with Cisco, Microsoft, and Avaya gaining 73%, 48%, and 38% of votes respectively<sup>2</sup>, in addition to a wealth of popular consumer options.

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## Employees don't want to abandon familiar applications

Employee preference for consumer communication solutions accounts for 8% of enterprises not making their UC solution more widely available<sup>2</sup> – requiring employees to rely on the applications they would use in their personal lives such as instant messaging, text, and video calls.

This reliance on consumer applications is compounded by expensive video conferencing and UC systems often being limited to one boardroom that the majority of employees don't regularly use – making consumer apps not just the popular option, but the only option.

To counter this, businesses need to do two things: implement a system that is cost-effective enough to be more widely applicable, and find a UC solution that supports external communication and existing consumer apps. But as established above, the sheer number of UC vendors and their lack of interoperability makes this very difficult.

## Training is an ongoing expense

This integration of existing and new communication systems often comes at the price of productivity before it can start to generate benefits. If a company makes video conferencing solutions available in day-to-day meeting rooms, each employee must be trained to use the hardware and software involved. This isn't a one-off cost, it's an ongoing expense, and it accounts for 14% of respondents making the decision to leave video conferencing out of the majority of meeting rooms<sup>2</sup>.



If employees find that the interface of the new video conferencing solution is too complicated to have a place in their day-to-day work, then they will revert to the applications and clients that they are more comfortable with – their smartphone's native conference applications, video chat clients on their desktop systems, and more.

This strengthens the case for a system that works alongside – not instead of – existing video conferencing applications. By integrating consumer and business communication platforms, and bringing the system to a location where every employee can have access to it, businesses free up valuable resources that would otherwise be spent on training.

## Collaboration is critical – how can these problems be solved?

Businesses around the world continue to face issues as they strive to create an environment of collaborative communication – whether it is a lack of interoperability, preferring consumer-facing video applications, the risk of an over-complicated system being unattractive for day-to-day conferencing, or the expense of making collaborative tools more widely accessible.



As such, the average meeting room is left without an interactive meeting solution because most modern offerings, whether designed for enterprises or consumers, are simply not scalable or affordable enough to be effective across an entire business. But this is where the real benefits are felt – not in one exclusive boardroom, but in a number of regularly used, diverse meeting rooms that see far more frequent use.

Linking these issues together is the cost in both time and money. Decision makers will not finance the business-wide installation of a system that their colleagues can't or won't use, or one that requires a considerable investment of time before it is fully operational.

However, with Virgin Media Business predicting that 60% of office-based employees will regularly work from home by 2022<sup>3</sup>, companies have little choice but to find a video conferencing solution to implement across the entire business.

### **Adding value by facilitating remote working**

54% of businesses consider employee collaboration and productivity to be a key measure when calculating Return On Investment (ROI)<sup>2</sup>. More than simply solving existing UC problems, the video meeting solution of the future must add value to the end-user experience.

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To maximise efficiency, users need to be able to collaborate face-to-face with colleagues from one or several remote locations and from multiple devices at once. For this, a system is required that can host many remote employees, and enable real-time collaboration through the use of annotation, presentations, and information sharing over interactive screens that can be split into sections to accommodate video conferencing, while also projecting a range of visual content.



### **The scalable solution to video conferencing**

The answer to the problem is clear, and it is available today. Compatible with all existing UC platforms and video conferencing software, Epson's solutions facilitate video conferencing in meeting rooms of all sizes by building the much-needed bridge between users and UC.



Combining an interactive whiteboard, projector, and video conference system, Epson's EB-1400 series represents an investment with plenty of practical daily application, maximising ROI without the restrictions of interoperability or a complicated interface.

The Epson EB-1400 series is designed for businesses wishing to extend video meetings beyond the boardroom – scalable enough for use by every employee in every meeting space, and at a fraction of the cost of traditional meeting room solutions.

### **Make every room a boardroom**

One organisation putting Epson's collaboration solutions into practice is consumer-centric IT business Cloudamour, who has created a 'customer immersion experience' around an Epson EB-1430Wi system – one that is affordable, and can be placed anywhere in a business to feel the benefits.

“The EB-1430Wi is a great solution because it allows us to use the meeting room to full effect, without the need for a lot of additional kit,” said Mitchell Feldman, Cloudamour’s CEO and founder. “The cost of this technology means that it is now accessible to all of our customers,” he continues, reaffirming the importance of a meeting solution that is affordable enough to be used beyond corporate boardrooms. “The ability to use the solution in multiple areas of their business to help drive a collaborative culture is a really attractive proposition for small businesses.”

Whether at the office or working remotely, keeping up momentum on the development of important projects and the creation of collaborative content is critical. With access to an Epson system, users can remotely annotate, edit, and discuss the same content as their colleagues, all while connected via video conference through

one affordable, scalable device. And according to Cloudamour, 87% of video conferencing users said Epson’s solutions made them feel more connected to their collaborative teams and colleagues<sup>4</sup>.

As UC spreads to organisations of every size around the world, a solution that connects them all is paramount – Epson’s EB-1400 series solves the key problems that turn many companies off the idea of a full system. By lowering costs, enhancing productivity, and easily keeping companies and colleagues connected, Epson’s collaborative meeting solutions support the existing and future applications that are critical to a continually growing business.

**FIND OUT MORE:**  
[epson.co.uk/meeting-solutions](http://epson.co.uk/meeting-solutions)



### Sources

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