

Smart Strategies to Deploy Reliable and Cost Effective Web Conferencing

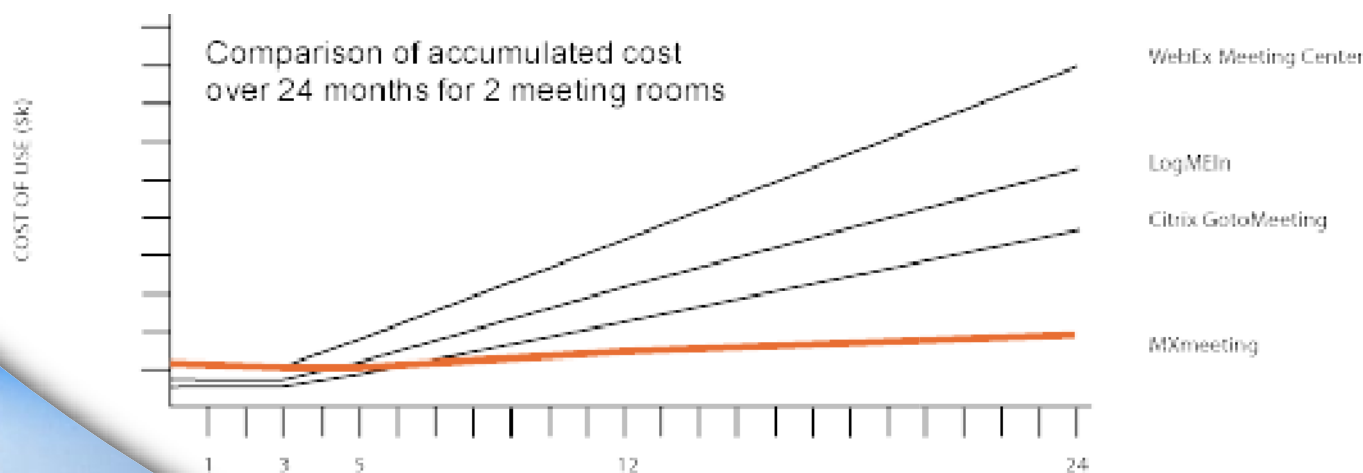
Most organizations recognize the numerous benefits of web conferencing. This technology enables sales presentations, product demonstrations, and interactive collaboration without the added expense and hassle of traveling across the country, or even across the globe. But many of us have also experienced the downsides to web conferencing. Have you ever tried to make a presentation to a client or partner, only to have technical problems when the recipient attempts to log on to the meeting?

When these inconvenient technical issues occur, the problem is not with web conferencing itself, but lies in the deployment of the technology. Many companies rely on a third-party vendor solution for web conferencing. Unfortunately, this approach usually requires remote users to download an application and dial into an outside system. The result is a host of connection issues, from firewall and anti-virus problems, to unsupported platforms such as Linux® or Unix®.

The most effective way to deploy web conferencing is through your own network. It is now possible to integrate web conferencing as part of your corporate phone system, eliminating many of the technical challenges — and the monthly fees — associated with typical web conferencing solutions. Through this approach you gain the reliability of using your own system for voice communications, and can depend on one point of contact for support and service for both voice and web conferencing. There is no software for end users to install and no need to distribute a dial-in bridge number. Your end result is a much higher connection rate and participation on the part of your customers, partners and your own team.

Benefits of Internally Deployed Web Conferencing

Internally deployed web conferencing has the security of housing all communications behind your own firewall and allows you to customize all interfaces to your own organization. Most systems have superb remote access capabilities, which means resolving technical issues for your customers requires minimal effort on their part. But the greatest benefit to you is cost savings. The up-front expense of deploying an internal web conferencing system quickly evaporates when compared to the long-term monthly fees of a third-party solution.



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An internally deployed web conferencing system enables you to coordinate web conferencing with participants anywhere in the world at a moment's notice. You can conduct web seminars, webinar polling and online focus groups, and never have to worry about logistical challenges and travel expenses. You can provide training or e-learning for employees or clients, and you can send files and presentations to all participants in real time.

With the right system, the meeting host has the capability to identify any attendee as the presenter, allowing that person full presentation control from their desktop or laptop regardless of their physical location. The presenter can then control how many monitors can be viewed by attendees, and can even limit what content is viewable to each participant.

The typical features you would expect from web conferencing are also included, such as multi-point video conferencing, interactive chat sessions and an online white board for drawing in real-time.

End-User Support

With an internally managed system, you never have to worry about awkward situations where a customer cannot access a meeting. Your attendees can join the meeting within seconds without downloading any kind of software. Since it is all part of a comprehensive system, you can configure your firewall to enable attendees to join from any platform with any web browser. Problems can be addressed through instant view and remote control functionality so that users are not frustrated by having to resolve technical challenges on their own. During the help session IT support becomes the presenter, thereby allowing your customer the comfort and security of viewing their screen while their technical issue is being resolved. Additionally, if your customer wishes to leave the room while their technical issue is being addressed, an internally managed system allows you to remotelock the supported computer to protect your client's privacy.

Moving Forward

If you're ready to deploy your own web conferencing system, be sure to seek out a vendor that can seamlessly integrate web conferencing with their phone system. They should be able to provide a comprehensive product where everything you need is provided in one package. This package should allow you to provision anywhere from 2 rooms and 10 users up to 20 rooms and 100 users. Additionally, your device should be self-updating in order to minimize IT support requirements.

The capabilities of web conferencing are too robust to ignore. By bringing this technology in-house, you increase control over the entire process and guarantee that your organization maintains the professional image you deserve. And with dramatically lower costs over the long-term, web conferencing is simply the most efficient and effective way to communicate.



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