

# Why 2011 Is The Year of Videoconferencing

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October 21, 2010

As industry consultants and analysts, we are beginning to see a dramatic shift towards videoconferencing and its use. Most of our enterprise clients are beginning to show significant interest and even demand for it. As an industry expert in VoIP and UC technologies, I am personally declaring “2011 as the Year of Videoconferencing”. Yes videoconferencing is here and it’s going mainstream – BIG time. Here’s why:

## Key Factors

- ▶ Travel is expensive – in this rightsized economy, reducing costs is always a key factor for acquiring any new system or product. Travel costs far outweigh videoconferencing costs
- ▶ Videoconferencing pricing has plummeted – we have seen videoconferencing systems costs go down by 15% to even 30% in the last 30 months, making videoconferencing a very cost effective face-to-face meetings
- ▶ Web conferencing and conference calling are standard practice for meetings today. Videoconferencing is now the next logical step in the evolution of the virtual meeting environment now a part of our mainstream culture
- ▶ Broadband and converged networks are here - IP is now everywhere and is flat rate. Bandwidth is now less expensive compared with the same 36-48 months ago
- ▶ Videoconferencing is now much easier to use and ease of use equals greater use and acceptance of videoconferencing in the market at large

## Other Factors

- ▶ Meetings are now recordable and have the ability to be played back for later viewing. Training via videoconferencing is “hot” for organizations requiring certifications and regular training
- ▶ Everyone is now mobile – and videoconferencing is a way to connect individuals across large geographies without disruption
- ▶ HD video is here – HD as we have come to embrace in the consumer market, is now available in the commercial videoconferencing space. Videoconferencing quality is now what you have come to expect from satellite and cable providers at 720p/30 frames per second and 720p/60 f/sec

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1. Assess your organization's needs for a videoconferencing solution – determine the need for the number of videoconferencing systems short and long term. Use ROI areas to facilitate payback for the investment
2. Develop budgetary pricing – research and determine what types of videoconferencing systems and add-ins will “fit” into your organizational structure, then get budgetary pricing from 1-3 manufacturers
3. Determine areas for savings and business improvements utilizing videoconferencing and document.
4. Enlist the help of experts towards an assessment and RFP/procurement – videoconferencing across many sites can get sizeable (balanced with a quick payback period, in most cases less than 24 months, in some less than 12 months). By doing so, cost savings in most cases are greater and their expertise will facilitate technical and tactical project elements
5. Develop a specification based on number of sites, users, room sizes, bridging requirements, white boarding and document sharing – a specification and RFP is the best way to leverage a procurement and your best vendor choice
6. Look to procure a videoconferencing solution by taking a look at the following key areas:
  - Vendor solution and technology
  - Video quality experience, ease of use
  - Vendor support and guarantees
  - One time purchase and ongoing costs
  - Demo-ing each vendor's equipment
7. Check customer references – request and call customers who are using the product
8. Select an internal test group test group to initialize the experience and obtain feedback
9. Develop policies and procedures for system use and meeting room availability post test group feedback
10. Promote and talk up the benefits of extending reach across the enterprise via videoconferencing – develop an Intranet Web portal showing the benefits and use of videoconferencing
11. Develop an organization-wide implementation plan across the entire enterprise. Schedule implementations systematically, and ensure there is enough network bandwidth for successful videoconferencing calls
12. Deploy site-by-site the chosen videoconferencing solution across your enterprise via project management and implementation.

The benefits of videoconferencing are dramatic, even organizationally shifting. It will provide benefits well beyond the travel costs aspect. It will bring individuals together across the organization; it will speed up business sales and processes and first-to-market aspects; it will bring together experts within minutes, and it will now engage those attending as a “meeting” and not just a videoconference now that HD video and other collaborative tools are here. Truly, 2011 is the year of videoconferencing.

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