



WHITE PAPER

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Why you should be demanding proactive  
vendor engagement throughout the  
technology cycle

## Closing the gap between expectations and results

So, you've invested in video collaboration. Now what? Is it delivering on its promise? Has it made a tangible contribution to the success of your business? Is it being utilized by your staff on a regular basis? How do you even measure its effectiveness and whether it's making a positive impact?

If you're at the point where you're considering a move to video collaboration, how can you best ensure you find a solution that works with your needs and delivers the design, deployment and ease of use that enables you to meet your business goals?

Recent analysis by Polycom suggests that many businesses that switch to video collaboration don't achieve the utilization or return on investment they anticipated when they bought the solution. What is behind this disparity and, more critically, what can be done to address it and enable video conferencing to deliver on the promise of the collaborative workforce?

## The changing landscape for technology services

According to industry body TSIA (Technology Services Industry Association), many technologies have become so complex that in order for client organizations to maximize their benefits, engaging with a specialist with relevant expertise can be strategically important throughout the solution's lifecycle—from the earliest planning stage through to ongoing operation.

This whitepaper examines the changing landscape for technology acquisition models and, in particular, looks at why working closely with a vendor who's as focused on your success as you are—through consulting, managed and support services—can play a vital role in helping you adapt quickly, no matter where you are in adding video collaboration into your business. Ongoing engagement with such a vendor will help you:

- Ensure closer alignment between your business goals and the video conferencing technologies used to achieve them.
- Deliver a high quality, highly available video-enabled unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solution for all your users.
- Achieve a stronger return on investment (ROI) through a solution that is well utilized and has a high adoption rate.
- Better manage capacity for video conferencing resources such as rooms, schedules, etc., and for critical infrastructure—including your data network.

### The Consumption Gap and B4B

TSIA is the leading association dedicated to advancing the business of technology services. Its recent publications include '*Consumption Economics: The New Rules of Tech*', and '*B4B: How Technology and Big Data Are Reinventing the Customer-Supplier Relationship*'.

In *Consumption Economics*, the authors talk about the 'consumption gap', an important trend where, as technology solutions become increasingly complex, there's an ever-widening gap between the features available from these solutions, and an organization's ability to 'consume' and therefore benefit from those features.

This means there's a clear role for technology vendors in helping customers close the gap between solution capabilities and actual

usage. The more clearly the vendor is able to assist clients in understanding how the solution works, the more likely they will use it to its fullest extent.

In *B4B* meanwhile, the authors note that, "In the old world, suppliers sold things to customers—that's what the 2 in B2B stands for. In the new world, suppliers are also going to start doing things for customers—that's what the 4 in B4B stands for. Customers are going to demand more involvement from their suppliers to ensure that the value they were promised is fully delivered."

## That was then. This is now.

To understand the business case for engaging with services throughout the product cycle, we need to look at what happens during the earliest planning phases, at a time when an organization is looking to invest in new technology.

### Then

Traditionally, once this decision had been made, someone on the IT team would be tasked with determining what the organization needed, and how to obtain the best solution at the best price. It's crucial to understand that at this point, the organization's process focuses on what it *wants*, not what it *wants to do better*.

In the case of video conferencing, the person or team responsible for selecting the solution would typically issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a high-quality video and audio solution with a set of attributes that represents their idea of what constitutes successful video conferencing technology. They would then use this RFP to assess the various options and decide which offered the best value for their available budget.

The organization's expectation of this process was a video conferencing solution which, by enabling more face-to-face meetings, would result in better understanding, faster decision-making, and closer collaboration and teamwork among its staff. Typically, this would come with the assumption that a solution with the right technical specifications would automatically be easy for employees to use, and, therefore, be well utilized, in addition to delivering a good ROI.

### Now

Often missing from that approach is any detailed conversation about the application of the technology, its specific use cases, implementation, and/or measurements of business success. And in a world where IT is increasingly driven by the need to serve and support specific business functions, the process fails to address the critical questions the organization *really* needs to answer, such as:

- What business results are we going to drive by deploying this solution?
- How many days are we going to take off our product design cycle? Or how can we stop products from shipping late?
- How can we make better decisions, faster?
- How much more innovative and productive can we help our employees to become?
- How much more accurate are our sales forecasts going to be?
- What will the system's impact be on the organization's bottom line?
- How will the solution help line of business managers with their specific use cases and challenges (e.g. HR vs. Engineering vs. Marketing etc.)?

All of these areas are where services can assist organizations in delivering tangible business benefits, results and added value throughout the solution cycle of planning, deployment and operation.

### The importance of use cases

Understanding exactly how your video conferencing system will be used is critical to successful design and deployment:

- Does your system need to support daily or weekly face-to-face 'talking head' meetings, or a sales manager wanting to hold monthly reviews with a team of remote sales reps?
- Do you need to integrate video with collaboration solutions such as Microsoft Lync or IBM, or business applications such as Brass Ring or Salesforce.com? Or do you want to combine multiple video and network infrastructures, for example following a merger or acquisition?
- Are you trying to encourage video conferencing use throughout the organization, or planning to keep this to the executive level?
- If the system is going to be used by senior executives, will they require a concierge service to ensure meetings are up-and-running prior to them joining?
- Do you have engineers out on telephone poles taking pictures of equipment and sending these back to you, or are you trying to interview students in colleges that don't have video conferencing facilities, and so need access to your system via their laptops?
- Are you looking to use HD video conferencing for a technical application like remote medical consultations, and if so, what will be the impact on your patient/doctor ratio by reducing the need for clinic visits?

Each and every use case is unique, and understanding these up-front is vital in ensuring the right solution design. Services can help you think through your use cases to understand what you're trying to accomplish, what you have, how to integrate it, and how to move forward in phases to make it work correctly—all while fitting your budget, planning, etc.

## Planning

### Answering the right questions, right from the start

To respond to the increasing complexity of UC solutions—and focus on business outcomes, workflows and use cases, rather than technical specifications, organizations need to make the best use of new technology solutions, and often need to be in ongoing contact with their vendors and/or their vendors' partners. This partnership is critical throughout the cycle of planning, deployment and optimization.

During the consideration and decision phases, for example, services can help to address specification, assessment, integration and design challenges—by establishing clear goals, mutually understood expectations and definitions of success, increased transparency during the design and readiness phases, and reduced downstream implementation issues—resulting in greater value.

### Solution design and envisioning

To ensure successful design and deployment, you should expect your vendor to be actively engaged in solution planning and design. Engaging with services should enable the discussion during the planning phase to evolve from one based on speeds, feeds and product specifications, to a conversation that starts by focusing on your specific business requirements, the business problem(s) you're trying to solve, and the approach that needs to be taken to ensure proper alignment between the solution and what you're trying to achieve from your purchase. In this way, both customers and vendors can better understand the specific needs of the business and tailor approaches to ensure that it meets the goals set from the outset.

In this context, solution design and envisioning services offer significant added value in translating your business needs into technical requirements: creating a design that meets your needs, establishing a detailed architecture based on these, and translating this into an integrated and seamless solution deployment.

#### Case study

##### Planning and professional services

One of the world's most successful beauty, household and personal care companies—and a long-term user of Polycom video conferencing solutions—was looking to expand their video usage and move to a self-service model. The company was using a video network operations center (VNOC) service to schedule and initiate calls, and engaged Polycom to develop a plan to migrate this to a self-serve virtual meeting room (VMR) model.

Unlike VNOC—which is a high-touch service typically involving scheduled meetings that are operator initiated and managed, and

where attendees only come into meeting rooms once the call has already been connected—with the VMR model, meeting attendees dial into the call themselves when they enter the conference room.

To enable the transition to VMR, Polycom provided professional services including network analysis, solution design, Lync integration, adoption and analytics, to develop a migration plan. Through this engagement the customer was able to phase out VNOC and achieve savings resulting in a payback period for the service engagement of just two months.

## Ensuring network readiness

Network readiness assessment can be vital when deploying a video collaboration solution on top of your existing data network infrastructure. Because real-time video collaboration is such a technically demanding application, undertaking a network readiness assessment will ensure you have the right foundation to successfully deploy the kind of video collaboration solution you need.

Alternatively, if you already have a video collaboration solution that is experiencing quality issues, the service can deliver significant improvements in results. For example, if the network has too much jitter, delay or insufficient bandwidth, this can severely inhibit the performance of your solution, and hence the experience of your users and their likelihood of using video for future meetings. By deploying comprehensive tools through which to measure these characteristics, the service will enable your IT team to see what is happening in the network, establish a baseline for how it needs to work, recommend how any problems can be resolved to address quality issues, and so deliver a reliable video and audio experience that keeps your users engaged with the solution.

### Why is video so difficult for IT teams to manage?

Historically, many organizations had an IT team managing their data network, and a telephone group handling the PBX, who would report within different silos. Although the advent of VoIP has meant the two have tended to merge under a single IT umbrella, there will often be separate groups handling the video and data environments—both of which speak different languages and have very different issues to address.

This is because, even though they run on the same infrastructure, the network traffic created by voice and video conferencing is significantly different from data traffic: it has different characteristics and has to be treated differently. In a data network environment, if packets are dropped, the network can request them to be resent.

But video traffic is recreating a real-time event. If someone speaks or changes their expression during a call, this must be captured and sent in real time to all the participants. And if the network drops packets along the way, there is no time for this to be fixed, resulting in degradation in the video conference experience, and ultimately lower utilization and ROI.

This fundamental difference in the way a video application behaves in the network is often not well understood—which is why services can help to address both the challenge of delivering compelling video conferencing experiences, and breaking down the communication barriers between video and network teams.

## Deployment

Today, most services engagements between product-centric technology providers and their customers occur when a system is being installed and initially deployed. This period of engagement may also include assistance with implementation, integration with collaboration tools such as Microsoft Lync, and development of customized applications.

For organizations with complex environments, deployment services are available to ensure their solution is seamlessly implemented into their production environment; integrated into email, calendaring and UC environments with minimal impact; and made as easy as possible to use. For those organizations with legacy or alternative vendor's systems, services can also help to seamlessly and efficiently transition supported video endpoints to their new video conferencing infrastructure.

Many organizations also require their video conferencing solution to be seamlessly integrated with, and made an extension of, collaboration tools such as Microsoft Lync, and/or want to fully integrate their video solution into their business processes (e.g. HR or CRM tools). Services can assist with these highly specialized requirements, by providing the expertise needed to integrate video conferencing into an existing collaboration environment, or customize the solution using open APIs (application programming interfaces).

### Case study

#### Integration with Microsoft Lync

A global development agency, with operations in more than 170 countries, and key focuses including poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and energy development, has a Polycom RealPresence video conferencing solution with more than 250 Group Series and HDX endpoints distributed around the world.

With a remote and mobile workforce, and challenges including offices in remote locations, a decreasing travel budget, and travel safety concerns, the agency was looking to enable online users of Microsoft Lync to join virtual meeting room (VMR) calls. Through its focus on ensuring customer success, Polycom's integration services enabled the fast track project to deliver on this need in just four weeks.

## Operation and Optimization

After installation, there is often a critical need for services to remain proactively engaged, and organizations should expect their technology vendor to continue to provide ongoing support and services for the operation of their solution.

The overall success of video collaboration projects demands a new level of service partnership based on proactive support, adoption and analytics, utilization, and potentially the complete outsourcing of ongoing operations through managed services. Through these services, you and your vendor can stay constructively aligned on achieving your organization's desired outcomes, and therefore build the trust and loyalty that are crucial to mutual success.

## Increasing utilization and adoption

It has been suggested that if the planning and effort put into implementing a technology is not matched by what's put into the planning for usage and adoption, then utilization will fall short—often far short—of the ideal, leading to disappointment and negative perceptions.

To identify this potential shortfall, optional reports are available to show utilization rates—by region, room, device, class of worker, etc.—and allow your organization to be benchmarked against its industry peers. These reports can then provide the basis for services engagement in areas such as adoption or optimization.

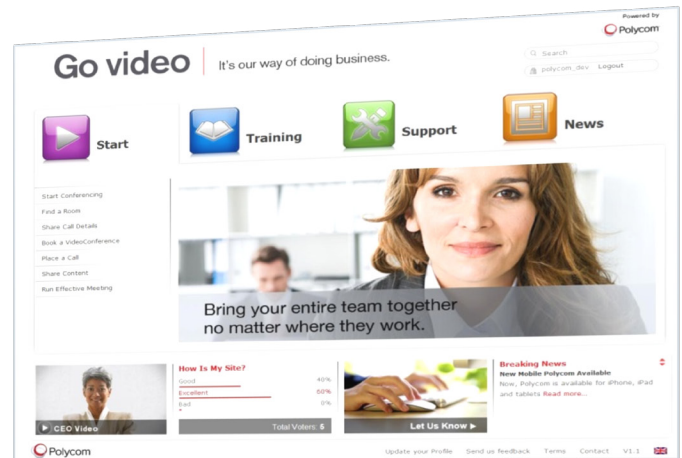
Driving adoption can often be as simple as raising awareness of the availability of video, or providing users with access to training, for example self-service training content such as short video clips that help them with dialing into the meeting, adjusting the camera view, changing the view, connecting via their laptop, sharing content, etc. The goal, obviously, is to enable a more consistent, high quality experience. Comprehensive consulting services and methodologies are also available to assist with issues limiting adoption, and therefore drive higher utilization and ongoing use of video collaboration within the organization.

In those cases where utilization is limited because there is no solid link between the business application and video infrastructure, or because it is not intuitive for users to embrace video, custom development assistance can be provided to embed video into the application.

## Bridging the consumption gap with analytics

When you invest in video conferencing, you do so not because of its advanced technical features, but because of your expectation of how it is going to help your organization evolve. To bridge the consumption gap and enable this vision to be realized, you need clear visibility into what is happening across all key aspects of the solution that has been deployed (especially as adoption increases and utilization grows):

- What is the experience of your end users? How many calls are being interrupted, impacted by the network, start late, or are placed and then dropped because the user dialed the wrong number or didn't understand how to use the equipment?
- Who is using the system, and more importantly who is not and why? Which rooms are the most and least utilized? How can the solution be made more accessible or more attractive to users, for example by providing training or additional assistance?
- If quality issues are being experienced, where are these coming from? Does the network need to be reconfigured to properly support video conferencing? Is all equipment optimally configured to meet your use case requirements, and running the most up-to-date software?



### Case study

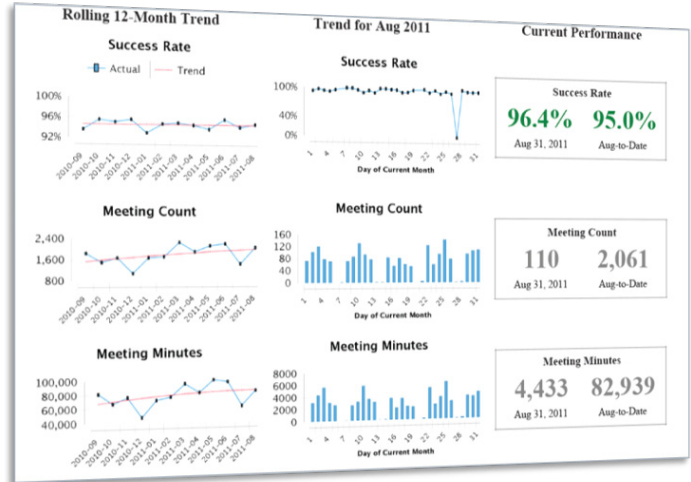
#### RealPresence Analytics total economic impact

To assess the value of Polycom RealPresence Analytics, Forrester interviewed a European-based multinational pharmaceutical company with over 100,000 employees. The company has 450 HD and 200 non-HD video conferencing systems, spread throughout the Americas, EMEA and APAC, for which 70-80% of calls are inter-region. Forrester found RealPresence Analytics achieved (three-year risk-adjusted) results for the customer of 41% ROI and a payback period of just 4.3 months.

- How does the system’s utilization compare with other users, and how much further can it grow before it reaches capacity?

To answer these questions and ensure the best possible experience for end users, you need analytics tools that let you monitor usage by endpoint and type of device (room system, desktop or mobile clients), bridge utilization, call duration, network flags, etc. These need to be combined with clear dashboards that let you uncover trends and deliver relevant information to key stakeholders across the organization.

New, cloud-based analytics tools can be used to non-disruptively identify performance issues, and provide the data needed to begin remediation projects such as reducing bridge overutilization, reducing packet loss impact, or identifying sites with low adoption rates for site-specific training and education.



### How does your organization’s utilization compare?

The table summarizes the results of a benchmark study of more than 100 Polycom customers. Although there is no ‘magic number’ for adoption that every customer can or should target, a room utilization rate of 15-20% should be a reasonable, realistic and achievable goal for most organizations.

Overall utilization	Highest 36% Median 9%
HD experience	Highest % of calls in HD 98% Median 48%
Network readiness (% calls impacted with packet loss)	Lowest % calls impacted 0% Median 19%
MCU utilization	Highest % calls on MCU 100% Median 41%

### Managed services

For organizations that would like to outsource some or all of the ongoing operation of their video collaboration solutions, managed services have the benefit of enabling proactive management and monitoring of the video environment, while considerably reducing the amount of internal IT resources and management overhead involved in delivering an optimum user experience. These internal resources can then be repurposed for other activities or projects. Managed services have been shown to lower operational costs, increase uptime, and result in a significant reduction in total cost of ownership for the video collaboration solution.

#### Case study Managed services

A US multinational provider of technology for electronic payments and value-added services at point-of-sale was looking to deploy a video conferencing solution for the first time. Polycom was able to demonstrate that, by opting for a hosted infrastructure and managed services, the customer would reduce their total cost of ownership by more than 25% over a three-year contract period.

### Tailored support

Finally, organizations need their technology vendor to provide the assurance and peace of mind that support services offer. Support services come in a variety of options—from the most basic reactive maintenance and break-fix level, to more advanced proactive support options that include value-add services such as monthly utilization reporting, bi-annual benchmarking against other companies, and self-serve user adoption programs.

#### Case study Elite support

As an example of the benefits of tailored support services, one long-term Polycom Elite customer has achieved a 2x return on their investment in Elite services, by avoiding the need to hire an extensive in-house team to support their video implementation.

## Building a collaborative environment—throughout your organization

In the workplace of the future, as businesses look for better ways to drive team collaboration, improve communication, and capture, manage and share knowledge across their dispersed workforce, video is rapidly evolving from a nice-to-have capability to one that is expected across the employee population. While video conferencing solutions can help organizations develop a more collaborative workforce, there are still barriers that can impede successful rollout.

These include:

- Cultural issues—teams may work well within workgroups and business units, but struggle to involve people outside these groupings in the agile and efficient ways needed to ensure communication is taking place, and collective ideas are being brought together to enable everyone to forge ahead in a common direction.
- People issues—individuals may have varying levels of comfort with mobility, working collaboratively, video-based virtual meetings, etc.
- Workflow issues—teams and individuals may need assistance in becoming more efficient and collaborative in a non-intrusive way that is fully integrated into their daily workflows and processes.
- The IT environment—organizations need to ensure their technology vendor delivers business solutions that function within their technology environment, regardless of what it is.

As a technology vendor as strongly focused on success as its customers are, Polycom is committed to:

- Partnering with the customer—through a services-led, consultative-based approach that focuses on customer needs throughout the entire journey from brainstorming issues, evaluating solutions, and making a decision, to deploying and maximizing the ROI on their chosen solution.
- Delivering the best customer experience—ensuring that the best solution is deployed by a partner and trusted advisor who has the ability to understand issues and is able to tailor solutions to meet the customer’s needs.
- Focusing on the customer’s success throughout the entire solution lifecycle. While this whitepaper has focused on services engagement during solution planning, deployment and operation, services can be beneficial at any point in the lifecycle—and are critical components no matter when and how often the customer expands, refreshes or evolves their video collaboration environment.

With decades of combined experience in delivering video collaboration solutions across thousands of customer organizations and a variety of multi-vendor technology environments, Polycom Services has become a trusted source in helping customers realize the fullest potential of their investment in collaborative solutions. By engaging with you as a proactive and agile business partner, and striving to become your trusted advisor, Polycom will help you plan, deploy, maintain, operate and evolve your solution so you can take full advantage of the latest advancements in collaboration tools and continue to grow your business.

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### Find out more

Polycom YouTube channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaOR83TrtZEpOXJZdtnZtqA>

Strategy and Planning Services : <http://www.polycom.com/products-services/services/professional-services/strategy-planning-services.html>

User Adoption Services : [www.polycom.com/adoption](http://www.polycom.com/adoption)

Utilization reports : <http://www.polycom.com/content/dam/polycom/common/documents/guides/sample-professional-service-benchmarking-endpoint-quick-reference-guide-enus.pdf>

Driving Video Collaboration Toolkit : <http://www.polycom.com/defydistance/video-for-all.html>



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## About Polycom

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. More than 400,000 companies and institutions worldwide defy distance with video, voice and content solutions from Polycom. Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience and unmatched investment protection.

Polycom, Inc.  
1.800.POLYCOM  
[www.polycom.com](http://www.polycom.com)

Polycom Asia Pacific Pte Ltd  
+65 6389 9200  
[www.polycom.asia](http://www.polycom.asia)

Polycom EMEA  
+44 (0)1753 723282  
[www.polycom.co.uk](http://www.polycom.co.uk)

