

Videoconferencing Can Add Two Months to the Year

High-end videoconferencing based on robust communications networks offers many qualitative benefits, including enormous time savings.

Collaborating via video doesn't just save money and jet fuel – it makes workers more effective and gives them more time. In a new global survey commissioned by Cisco, British research group Ipsos Mori polled 500 workers in 12 countries. They found that users of telepresence and videoconferencing experience a greater variety of benefits than their employers had anticipated when they put these systems into place.

Benefits such as building trust, improving group collaboration and increasing competitive advantage emerged as being nearly as important as cost savings. Even more interesting, an overwhelming majority of frequent users – 90 percent – believe video collaboration technologies save them at least two hours of valuable work time per week. One-third of survey respondents who frequently use video collaboration estimate they save close to one full day – seven hours or more – per week. That adds up to more than two months of time a single employee can gain back over the course of a year.

Odd Johnny Winge, vice president and general manager of Cisco's TelePresence Systems business unit (and formerly the president of Tandberg, a Norwegian videoconferencing company that Cisco acquired earlier this year), says, "Lost productivity costs businesses billions each year. By implementing telepresence, our customers are able to save significant amounts of time, which can have huge implications for increasing efficiencies, productivity and competitive advantage.

"We frequently hear from our customers how much they value the more qualitative benefits of Cisco TelePresence, and this study validates that these

Videoconferencing can also build trust, improve collaboration and bolster a company's competitive advantage.

benefits are just as powerful as the often-discussed travel and cost-reduction benefits."

YOU HAD TO BE (VIRTUALLY) THERE

Experiencing telepresence and videoconferencing appears to make some of these benefits more apparent. Although 76 percent of users and 60 percent of nonusers recognize the value of video collaboration, frequent users value qualitative benefits far more than nonusers. For example, 73 percent of frequent users and 42 percent of nonusers said video collaboration increases their companies' competitive advantage, 71 percent of frequent users and 40 percent of nonusers said it brings people closer together and 70 percent of frequent users and 37 percent of nonusers said it improves work-life balance.

Other benefits are apparent even to those who are not using this technology. Both users and nonusers agreed that video collaboration enhances the communication experience when they work from home (68 percent), helps maintain operations if work is disrupted (67 percent), improves group collaboration (67 percent), reduces confusion (67 percent) and projects a forward-looking view of an organization (64 percent).

Workers in China were the most likely to report large time savings from using video collaboration and telepresence – 46 percent of them said they

could experience time savings of seven hours or more per week. (Not surprisingly, Chinese survey respondents were the most likely to use video collaboration technology – 56 percent of them used the technology, more than double the percentage in any of the other 11 countries.) By contrast, only 20 percent of Russian workers reported they could save more than seven hours per week.

More than two-thirds of respondents perceive environmental benefits to using video collaboration technology, either through enhancing environmental responsibility or as a benefit of reduced travel. Across all 12 markets, at least half the workers saw some environmental benefit.

The market for video collaboration is far from saturated: A third of those polled who are not now using video collaboration solutions said they would be likely to do so if it were available to them. However, some workers have the technology available but do not currently use it – a percentage that is much higher in France (54 percent) than in other markets, such as the United States (21 percent), Sweden (13 percent), Germany (13 percent) and Spain (13 percent).

Full study details can be found at www.cisco.com/en/US/prod/collateral/ps7060/ps8329/ps8330/ps9599/Video_Collaboration_Study_Whitepaper_FINAL.pdf. **BBP**