
VIDEO CONFERENCING

COMPARISON GUIDE

You need video conferencing capabilities, and lets be honest, Skype isn't cutting it. Marco offers a variety of video conferencing options to fit any level of need.

The logo for Marco, featuring the word "marco" in a lowercase, serif font. A yellow swoosh underline is positioned beneath the text, starting under the 'm' and ending under the 'o'. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the right of the 'o'.

marco®

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INTRODUCTION

Video conferencing systems typically start in a conference room or classroom and then scale up or down from there. By up, the system could get bigger with more screens, more projectors, more rooms and more locations. By down, the system could get smaller. It could be an individual employee's workstation or even go mobile.

When choosing the right video conferencing system and components for your organization, you'll first want to consider your conferencing needs – and then you'll want to select the system and components that can accommodate them. Enlisting the assistance of an expert during this assessment can streamline the process and ensure all necessary considerations are reviewed.

**TALK WITH A VIDEO
CONFERENCING SPECIALIST**

RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS

Meanwhile, you'll also want to research your options – and that is what this guide is designed to help with. We'll begin by introducing two conferencing solutions that can be implemented individually, or in combination. From there we'll compare both solutions against the features customers care most about:

- Video Quality Assurance
- Required Hardware Investment
- Security
- Recording Options
- Instant Messaging/Presence
- Voice Integration
- Group Meeting Spaces
- Hosted
- Customer IT Support Required
- Ongoing Maintenance Costs
- Speed of ROI
- Scalability

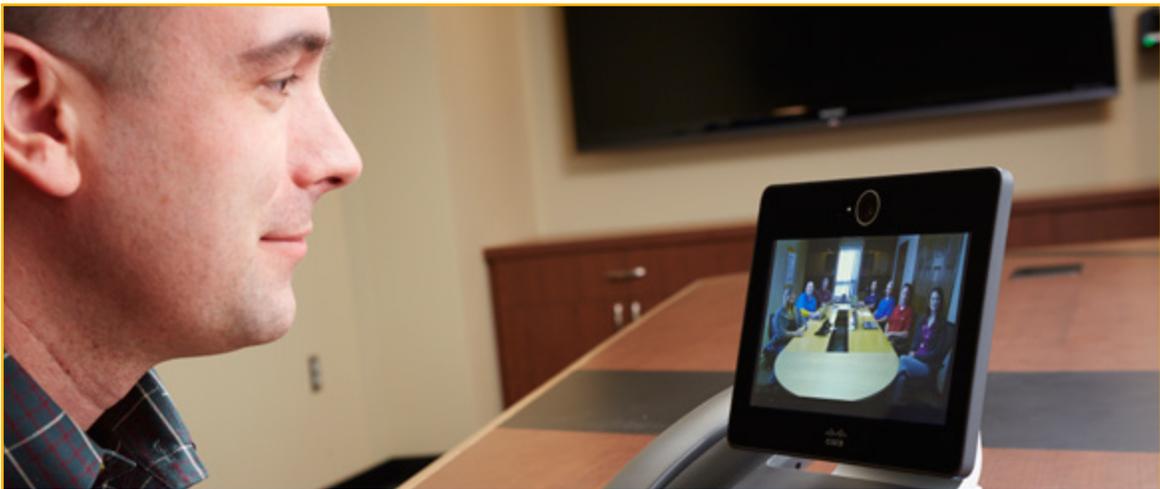
At the end of this guide you will be equipped with all the information you need to help you make a video conferencing system selection that matches your business needs and budget.

VIDEO CONFERENCING OPTIONS

ON-PREMISE VIDEO CONFERENCING

Video conferencing equipment can help you bring high definition video conferencing to the big screen so you can reach a larger audience with even more impact. This could include the infrastructure in your data center to run and manage video and/or the equipment in the conference rooms or offices where the video conferences take place. Our systems can be built to include the following:

- Advanced video technologies that deliver the highest quality, yet consume up to 50 percent less bandwidth than alternative solutions
- State-of-the-art cameras that allow for greater eye contact and a continuous whole-room experience with no field-of-view blind spots
- Microphones with better pickup range and noise reduction
- Audio built into the conferencing table
- Touch screen **room automation systems** that control everything from turning on displays, to connecting your laptop, to adjusting the room lighting
- Interoperability with the leading unified communications solutions that integrate with standards-based video phones, PC-based video solutions and third-party telepresence systems
- Complete, all-in-one systems that include everything you need for your data center infrastructure and conference room equipment
- Customizable, a la carte and expandable options that will help you reap the most from your system for years to come



UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Unified communications is an integrated suite of tools that puts all of your communication apps in one convenient place. Video conferencing is just one of the easy-to-use tools. The suite also includes instant messaging, audio, Voice over IP and web conferencing. With unified communications, you can see instantly who's online or offline, who's at their desktop or who's away at a meeting, making staying in touch easier than ever.



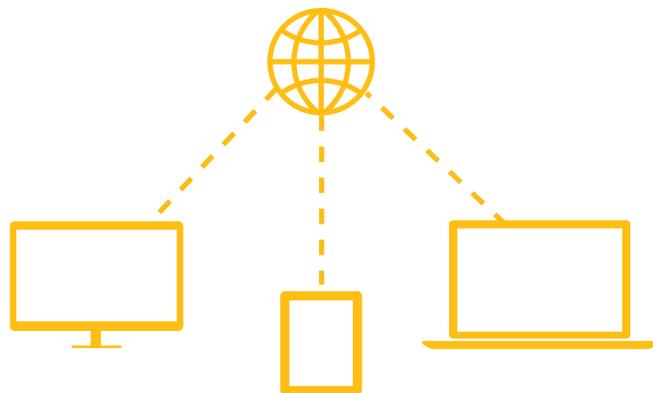
INSTANT MESSAGING



AUDIO



VOICE OVER IP



WEB CONFERENCING

Each of these video conferencing systems meets different collaboration requirements common in many organizations. In many cases, businesses end up creating a hybrid solution that combines one, two or all three of the above solutions in order to take advantage of the benefits and meet all of their specific needs. But before you decide which is right for you, let's look a little closer at how each solutions' benefits compares to the others.

VIDEO CONFERENCING: COMPARISON CHART

	ON-PREMISE VIDEO CONFERENCING	UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS
Video Quality Assurance	✓	✓
Purchase Hardware Needed	✓	
Security	✓	✓
Recording Options	✓	✓
IM/Presence		✓
Voice Integration	✓	✓
Group Meeting Spaces	✓	
Customer IT Support Available	✓	✓
Ongoing Maintenance Costs & Updates	✓	✓
Scalability		✓

BENEFITS COMPARISON

VIDEO QUALITY ASSURANCE

With on-premise video conferencing and unified communication systems, perfect video quality can be guaranteed. This quality can be guaranteed because video traffic takes place on your network. We can enable Quality of Service (QoS), which gives priority to voice and video through your network infrastructure.



REQUIRED HARDWARE INVESTMENT

With on-premise video conferencing systems you need to buy hardware for all endpoints (i.e. conference rooms and offices) as well as the infrastructure to facilitate your video calls. Of the two video conferencing solutions, an on-premise system is the only one that requires hardware to be purchased.

SECURITY

Both video conferencing solutions ensure that your video traffic is encrypted. No one can hack into conferences held on these platforms.

This is one of the primary advantages business video conferencing solutions offer over consumer-based alternatives. With consumer video conferencing options – Skype, Facetime, Google+ Hangouts for example – there is little security in place to protect your privacy.

RECORDING OPTIONS

With both video conferencing solutions you can record the video, audio and content presented within the conference. This recording can then be shared with meeting attendees that were unable to attend, and other employees, or it can be saved and referenced in the future.

The only differences are how the recording is done, and the cost associated with facilitating this option. For example, on-premise solutions require a recording server.





INSTANT MESSAGING & PRESENCE

Unified communication systems enable efficiency by allowing you to see the availability status of your co-workers and send/receive short messages, without filling up your inbox. Instant messaging (IM) and presence capabilities can enhance organizational productivity by providing access on mobile devices and desktops, plus it integrates with your calendars.

Without having to leave your workspace, you can determine if co-workers are available, quickly collaborate with them and continue working, without missing a beat.

VOICE INTEGRATION

Both systems can accommodate video calls in conjunction with audio-only calls. So, for example, if you are hosting a video conference, but have a few traveling salespeople that can't join via video, but can call in, both systems can enable the meeting to proceed without difficulty. Though video participation is ideal, your attendees won't have to miss the conference entirely if their schedule only allows audio participation.

GROUP MEETING SPACES

For conference room-based video conferences, an on-premise system is your best option. Providing a space where more than one person can host or join a video conference is essential for many businesses. In order to facilitate these meetings most effectively, we always need to put hardware in place. Because there is no computer in the conference room to run your video conference, we install a codec, which is a purpose built box that encodes and decodes the audio and video for your call. Because the codec is purpose-built for encoding and decoding audio and video, it will enable the best quality video conferences held in group meeting spaces.

With that being said, your other alternative – unified communications – can also be used in your group meeting spaces (conference rooms, boardrooms, classrooms, etc.), but hardware is still required to make them operational. Because your laptop is the engine that drives the video and audio, the only hardware that needs to be installed is the microphone and high-quality camera, so the entire group space can be captured on the conference.





CUSTOMER IT SUPPORT

With on-premise video conferencing systems and unified communications, your IT department generally puts this equipment in place and manages its use within your organization. So, when someone has a question or runs into an issue, they can simply connect with your IT department for help answering their question or resolving their problem.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE COSTS & UPDATES

With on-premise systems, you have to have an annual maintenance agreement on every piece of hardware you buy. These agreements keep your systems updated with the latest software and give you access to help desk support.

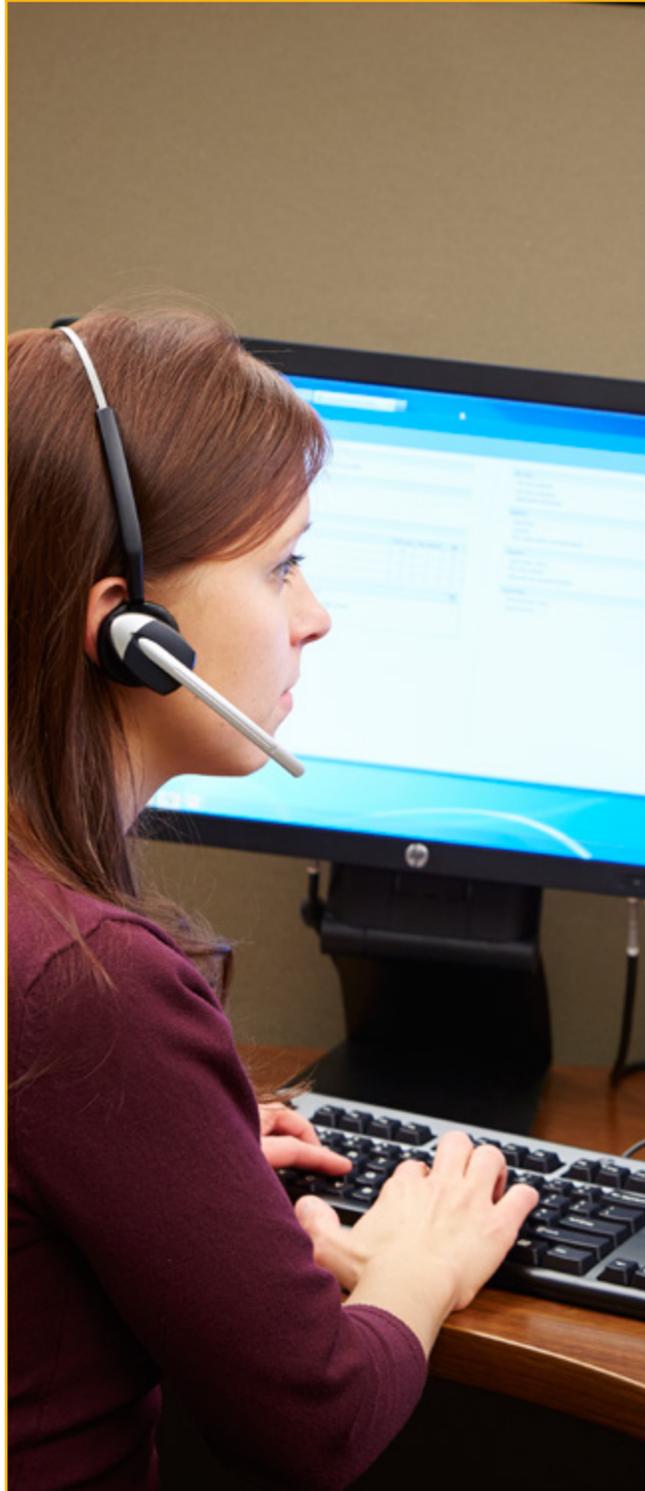
Unified communication solutions incorporate maintenance costs into their licensing. You license the software to your users on an annual basis; therefore you pay maintenance costs on an annual basis as well.



SCALABILITY

The scalability of unified communications is as easy as contacting your vendor or logging into your portal to add licenses.

As we said earlier, an on-premise system requires a significant capital investment up front, but it also requires additional investment over time, as you need to scale your system to accommodate your growth. For this reason, on-premise video conferencing solutions are not considered easily scalable.





THE MARCO ADVANTAGE

As you may have noticed, both of these solutions have a number of similarities, as well as unique differentiators, which make it difficult to do an equal comparison of the solutions as a whole. Therefore, we've broken it down by features and benefits to provide a more targeted evaluation of your options.

Now that you've made it through this guide we hope you have a better understanding of your options; but we also anticipate there isn't one clear solution for your business – as each individually meets different needs you have defined in your needs assessment. This is the case for most of our customers, which is why we've committed to providing both of them.

CUSTOMIZABLE

With most business technology products and services, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. Most often, the best way to meet your needs is to implement a combination of these video-conferencing options. Let's look at a quick example:

An organization has Microsoft Lync, a unified communications platform, installed and they are currently using it for instant messaging, presence and video conferencing. But, they continue to run into collaboration issues because they don't have a good solution for their conference rooms. So they turn to Marco.

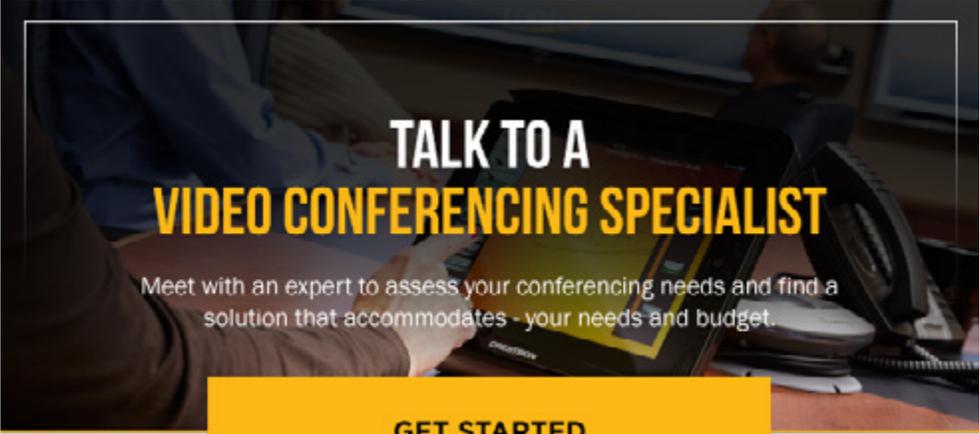
To create an effective group meeting space in the conference room, Marco installed a Polycom video codec, which has a direct integration with Microsoft Lync. Now users can use Microsoft Lync to call the conference room directly, and experience a good quality call.



CONCLUSION

This example is just one of many possible combinations. As you can see, this organization adjusted their systems to match their needs as they arose.

What are your video conferencing needs? How are your current tools falling short? And what are these shortcomings costing you - in terms of dollars and productivity? We can help assess your needs and determine the video conferencing solution that meets those needs and fits within your budget.



**TALK TO A
VIDEO CONFERENCING SPECIALIST**

Meet with an expert to assess your conferencing needs and find a solution that accommodates - your needs and budget.

GET STARTED

Did you find this e-book useful? Share it with your friends!





Technology is a different animal. It can be expensive. Hard to wrap your head around. Overwhelming to keep up with. And yet it's usually critical to the success of your business. It's not the kind of purchase you make once and forget about. Because like your business, it's **always changing**. That's why choosing the right technology provider is so important.

At Marco, we know how immense and fluid technology can feel. So we do everything we can to match you up with the right technology and keep it running smoothly day in and day out. We'll keep an eye out for products and processes that could save you precious time and money. And, we'll help you avoid the ones that won't.

We're big enough to offer you premium quality and selection. And we're small enough to give you **personalized service** grounded in Midwestern values. As your technology partner, we offer you the perfect mix of both worlds.



Connect with us to learn more about Marco and take your technology further.