Best Practices for Deploying MS Teams with Video

Success from Integrating Teams with Existing Video Endpoints

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Executive Summary

A growing number of organizations are implementing Microsoft Teams to improve group communications and collaboration. As Microsoft customers shift from Skype for Business to Teams, they must implement a strategy that supports integrating existing and planned video endpoints into their Teams implementations. This report provides a look at Microsoft Teams implementation trends, and shares best practices for successfully integrating Teams with video to ensure collaboration success.

Teams adopters must integrate their legacy videoconferencing environment to ensure that existing meeting spaces are able to support Teams-based meetings as easily as any other endpoint. To do so, IT leaders should:

- Evaluate platforms that offer the ability to easily integrate existing room-based videoconferencing systems into Microsoft Teams supporting features like one-touch join, and the ability to schedule meeting rooms via Microsoft Teams
- Consider cloud-based services to speed deployment, and to take advantage of operational expense billing models that provide flexibility and scale
- Ensure visibility into end-to-end videoconferencing performance of all endpoints, including legacy, software, and Microsoft Teams-based room systems
- Leverage analytics platforms that provide insight into room system utilization and ROI.

Achieving Videoconferencing Success

To define videoconferencing success, Nemertes developed a matrix to evaluate research participant performance. Successful organizations must, at a minimum:

- Have videoconferencing room system utilization greater than 50% of available time per week
- Identify productivity gains of at least 5% from using videoconferencing
- Highly rate the success of their videoconferencing investments in meeting their collaboration goals.

We then analyze research participants to determine those who met all three of these criteria, and how their approach to deploying and managing videoconferencing differs from the overall pool of participants. Those qualifying as successful organizations:

- Use videoconferencing for at least 75% of their meetings
- Have the same provider for desktop and room-based videoconferencing
- Use dedicated room systems, rather than a PC or laptop, plugged into an external web camera and display
- Use cloud-based videoconferencing services

Based on this matrix, just 11.4% of our pool of more than 500 end-user organizations qualify as having successful visual communications and collaboration strategies.

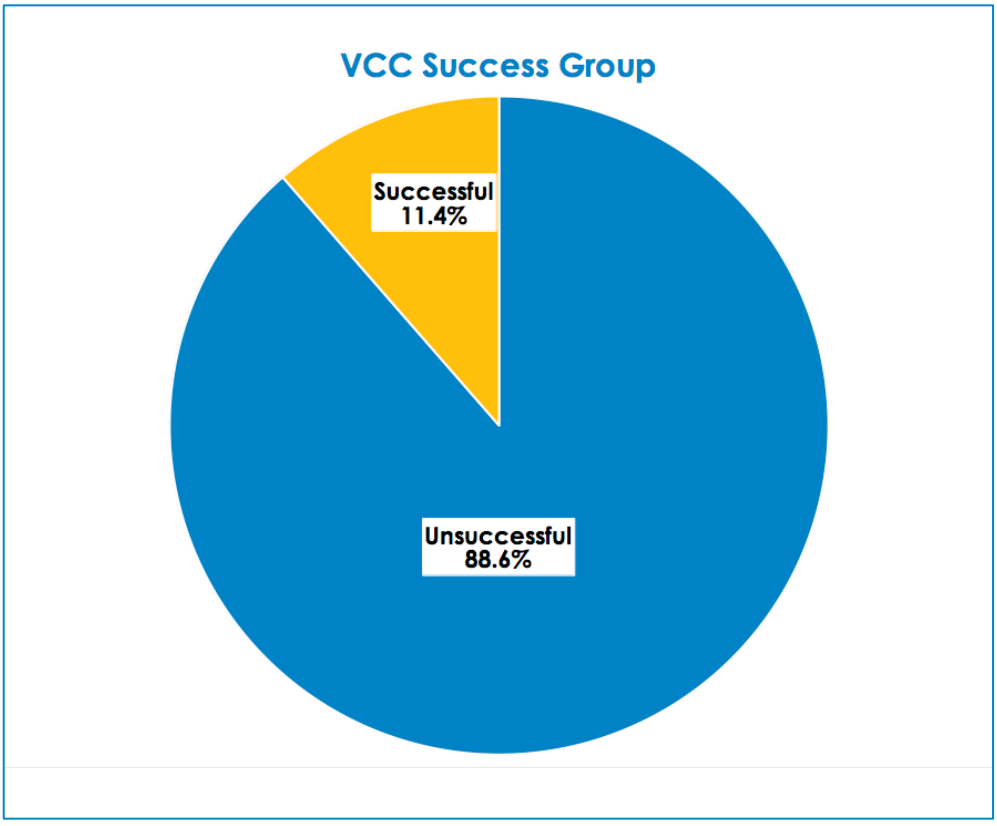

Figure 1: VCC Success Group

Achieving success, particularly high utilization of available systems and services, requires that IT leaders focus on ease of use, and ubiquitous ability for anyone to connect to a conference at any time, from any location, using any device.

Ensuring ease of use, and connectivity to any end-point requires:

- Consistency of experience across meeting spaces, ensuring that no matter what room a participant uses, the process for starting or joining a meeting is the same
- Enabling participants to use the existing meeting systems they already possess
- Supporting the ability of callers to connect through the native clients that they are already using
- Ensuring that IT support groups have visibility into call quality to address any performance related issues as quickly as possible.

The Rise of Microsoft Teams

Team collaboration apps are rapidly reshaping how individuals collaborate with their peers, both inside and outside of their organizations. Nemertes' *Workplace Collaboration: 2019-20 Research Study* (based on data gathered from approximately 625 end-user organizations in North America, Europe, and Asia) shows that from 2017 to 2019, team collaboration application adoption rose from just 19.4% of participating companies, to 33.7% in 2019, with another 30.1% planning to deploy by the end of 2020. Additionally, 14.6% are evaluating using team collaboration apps; just 11.5% have no plans for team collaboration applications within their organizations. It is clear that team collaboration apps represent the present and future of collaboration.

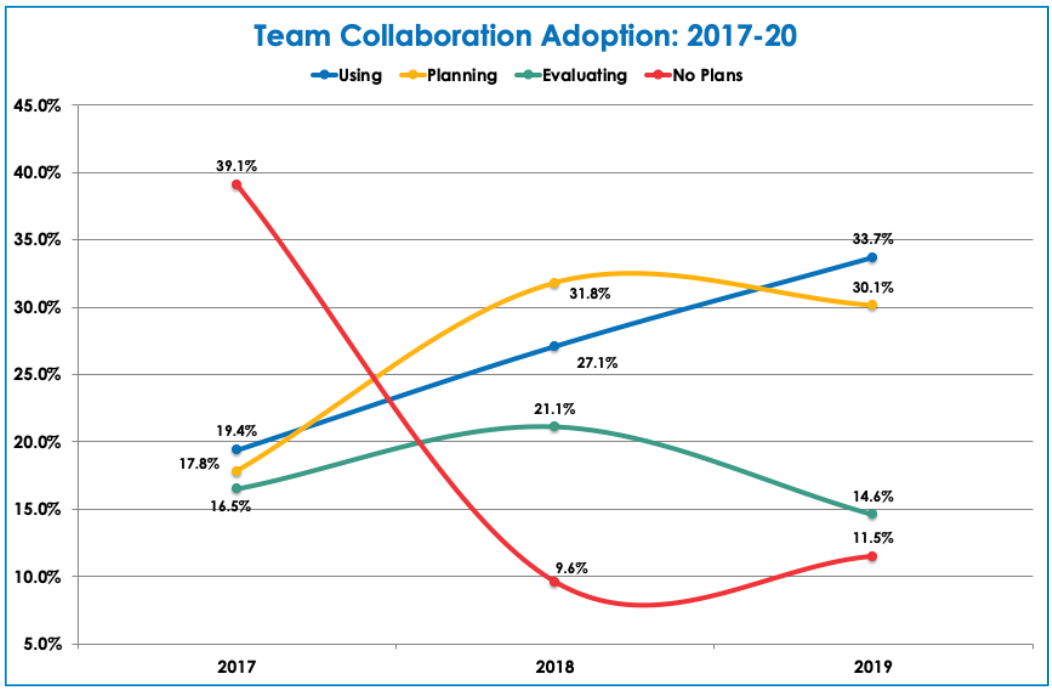

Figure 2: Team Collaboration Adoption: 2017-20

Among those using, or planning to deploy in 2019, 55.9% have implemented, or plan to implement Microsoft Teams as their sole, or primary team collaboration platform.

Transitioning from Skype for Business

Microsoft Teams represents an evolution of Skype for Business (S4B) with several key differences:

- Whereas S4B offered both on-premises and cloud-based deployment models, Teams is cloud only
- The Teams user interface is primarily centered around team channels, which are typically associated with projects, team functions (e.g. sales, human resources, etc.), or for functions like corporate announcements. Channels enable persistent chat spaces, as well as integrations with business applications and workflows
- Communications services like calling and meetings are easily launched from within channels.

Extending Microsoft Teams Video

Those adopting Microsoft Teams gain access to not only a chat-based team collaboration platform, but also a robust meeting application that provides integrated audio and videoconferencing, as well as screen sharing, with the ability to launch meetings from within team channels. The integration of meeting applications and team collaboration means that meetings can occur in the context of discussions related to projects or operational activities, with participants easily able to access, and collaborate on relevant documents while in the meeting.

Keys to Consider:

1. Does the service enable easy integration existing room-based videoconferencing systems into Microsoft Teams supporting features like one-touch join, and scheduling?
2. Is the service cloud-based, providing speed of deployment and operational expense billing?
3. Does the service provide end-to-end performance visibility for all endpoints?
4. Does the service provide analytics platforms that provide insight into room system utilization and ROI?

Microsoft Teams natively supports videoconferencing via its desktop and mobile clients, as well as its Surface Hub interactive collaboration device. Those wishing to extend the Teams experience to meeting rooms and huddle spaces have the following options:

- **Purchase Microsoft Teams Room systems from Microsoft partners**. These solutions typically bundle together cameras, codecs, computing devices, and audio devices into an integrated room system that leverages the Teams client to enable meeting participants to see scheduled meetings, and to start or join meetings at the appropriate time.
- **Leverage a Microsoft-partner solution to integrate Teams with existing room systems.** These solutions provide a mediation service that enables organizations to integrate their existing standards-based videoconferencing endpoints with Teams. This level of integration typically allows scheduling of room systems, and one-click

join to meetings using existing room controllers or interfaces. Approximately 31% of our 2019-20 Workplace Collaboration research study participants are using meeting interoperability platforms, while another 19.5% plan to do so by the end of 2019.

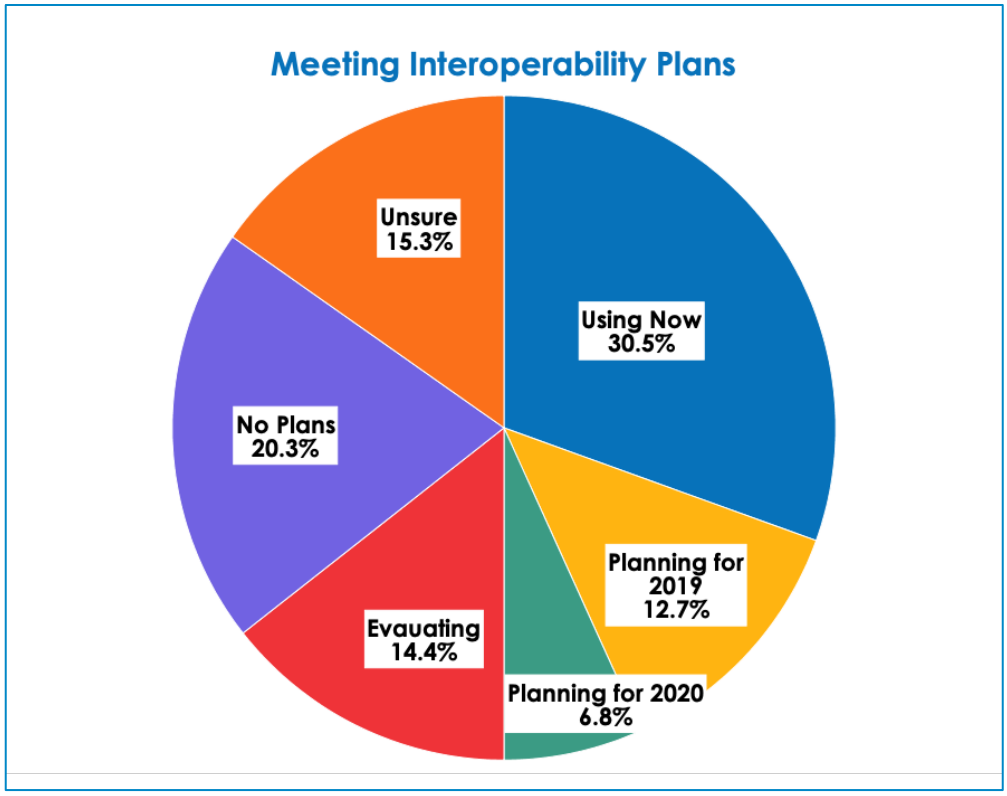

Figure 3: Meeting Interoperability Plans

Many organizations already possess extensive videoconferencing endpoints within their meeting rooms and huddle spaces. For example, of those who cite Microsoft as their primary workplace collaboration vendor, 31.7% use Cisco for videoconferencing, while nearly 18% are using Poly (the former Polycom). Companies that have grown through merger and acquisition are likely to possess a wide variety of existing room systems.

It is not realistic, or cost advantageous, to scrap existing investments in videoconferencing endpoints during a migration to Microsoft Teams. Rather, success comes from enabling integration between Teams and current room systems, enabling consistency of user experience. Nearly half of companies with successful workplace collaboration strategies use a meeting integration platform, versus just 26.8% of those with non-successful strategies. The correlation between meeting integration and success comes from two factors:

- Creating simpler user experiences by ensuring that meeting participants can easily join regardless of type of room system
- Enabling IT to monitor and manage videoconferencing performance and utilization across both Microsoft Teams native-clients as well as existing room systems.

Video Integration: Leveraging the Cloud

As organizations shift to Teams, they are, in effect, migrating their calling and meeting infrastructure from on-premises servers to the cloud. As they look for interoperability solutions for Teams, a cloud interoperability platform may serve as the ideal complement to Teams. Cloud interoperability platforms bring the same benefits as cloud communications applications, namely the ability to quickly deploy a solution, scale it up and down as needed, and to eliminate capital investments and operational costs associated with deploying and ongoing software management. Cloud solutions also easily support extending of meetings beyond corporate boundaries, enabling partners, customers, and suppliers to join Teams-based meetings using their own video existing conferencing endpoints.

Unifying Monitoring and Management

Successful organizations monitor both performance metrics, as well as utilization and adoption. The most often measured metrics include:

- Number of support tickets opened
- Productivity gains as a result of using new meeting capabilities
- Cost savings from reducing travel
- User feedback providing insight into quality of experience
- Utilization of endpoints

Nearly 90% of research participants use some tool for collecting analytics, either capabilities provided by their videoconferencing vendor, or those from a third-party platform. (Please see Figure 4.) Analytics include meeting length, number of participants, utilization rate of room systems, and audio and visual performance. Leveraging a meeting interoperability platform that provides end-to-end analytics for both existing room systems, as well as native team clients, provides IT and business leaders with the information they need to optimize deployments, identify performance-related issues, and determine business benefit of collaboration application investment.

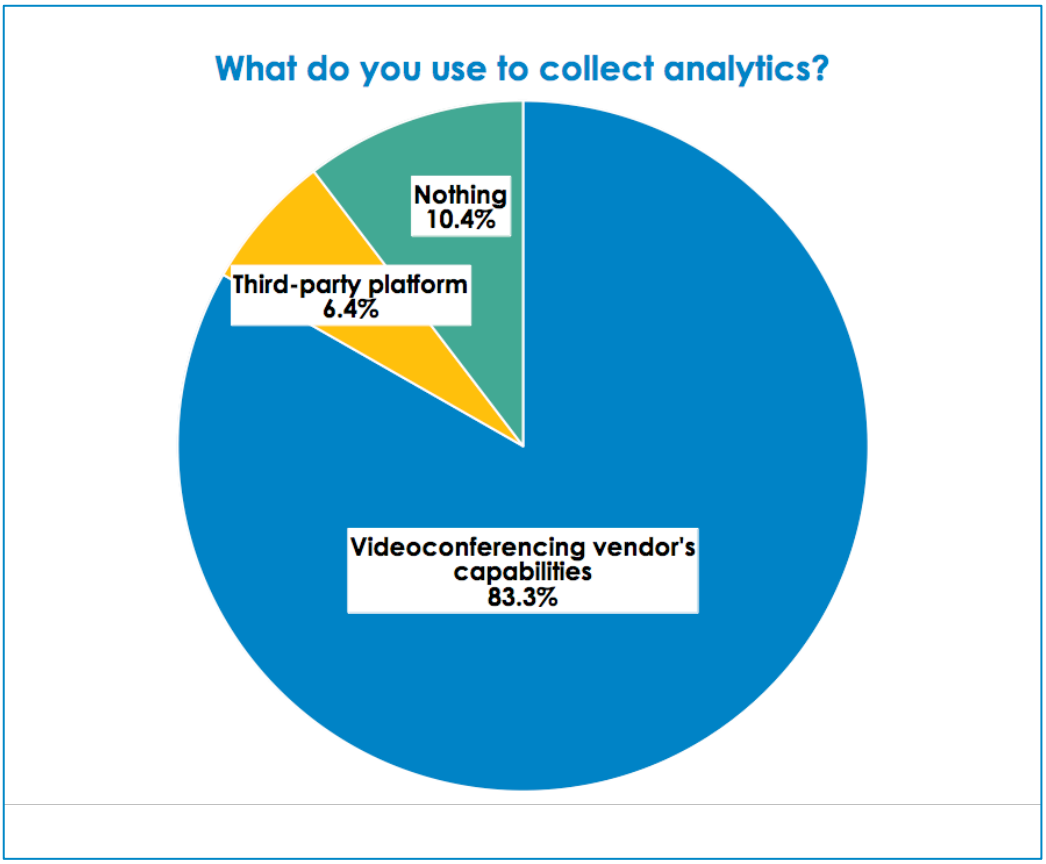

Figure 4: What do you use to collect analytics?

Conclusion

Microsoft Teams has arrived, and will continue to reshape enterprise collaborations in the years to come. Success comes from extending Teams capabilities both across the organization, as well as to partners and suppliers, creating an easy-to-use environment in which individuals can join meetings from any device, via a consistent user experience.

Achieving this goal requires enabling interoperability between existing videoconferencing systems and Teams, ideally through a cloud-based platform that complements Teams, provides for the same easy scale, and that delivers integrated performance management and analytics that allows IT leaders to monitor quality and utilization.

To meet these goals, IT leaders should:

- Evaluate platforms that offer the ability to easily integrate existing room-based videoconferencing systems into Microsoft Teams supporting features like one-touch join, and the ability to schedule meeting rooms via Microsoft Teams
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About Nemertes: Nemertes is a global research-based advisory and consulting firm that analyzes the business value of emerging technologies. Since 2002, we have provided strategic recommendations based on data-backed operational and business metrics to help enterprise organizations deliver successful technology transformation to employees and customers. Simply put: Nemertes' better data helps clients make better decisions.