# Highfive

# How to Choose the Right Video Conferencing Provider

# Not all video solutions are alike

You know that gratifying feeling that occurs when someone totally gets what you're saying? It turns out you need face-to-face communication to experience it. According to research,* **seven percent of communication is based on words and the other 93 percent is based on body language,** such as the tone of your voice or the look on your face.

Regardless of the countless ways social media empowers us to quickly communicate a message, we humans will always crave face-to-face communication. Thankfully, video conferencing allows you to make face-to-face connections with others even when you're apart. It also makes life more efficient, people more productive, and reduce excessive travel costs.

So what's the catch? It's an industry that's constantly evolving and there are as many options to choose from as there are narcissists on Instagram — staggering, I know. The good news is, just like that nerdy kid in seventh period calculus, we've done your homework for you.

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## Inside this ebook, you'll discover how to:

✓ Assess your company's video & web conferencing needs

✓ Evaluate video & web conferencing costs

✓ Identify video providers that are right for you

*\* Source: http://www.forbes.com/sites/susantardanico/2012/04/30/is-social-media-sabotaging-real-communication/*

"In our technology-driven world, making genuine connections with colleagues and customers is essential to building rich and rewarding relationships."

Greg Morton, Chief Marketing Officer

**Great Place to Work Institute**

# Work is changing

Technology has forever transformed the modern workplace. Office environments are now designed to facilitate a project-based approach to work. Conference and huddle rooms enhance collaboration in large and small groups, respectively. Open floorplans, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and "hot-desking" foster efficiency among employees on-the-go. The workplace has become a much more fluid concept, but it's not just the workspace, it's how people are working.

Today, companies are using more freelancers to accomplish goals. And while freelancers have traditionally spent a significant amount of time working remotely, now full time employees do, too. Work is a thing you do, not necessarily a place you go.

But regardless of how much time we spend away from headquarters, one thing remains constant: we need to connect with other people, and video services this need. It connects those who are remote with those on site, enabling them to share goals and work together as a team.
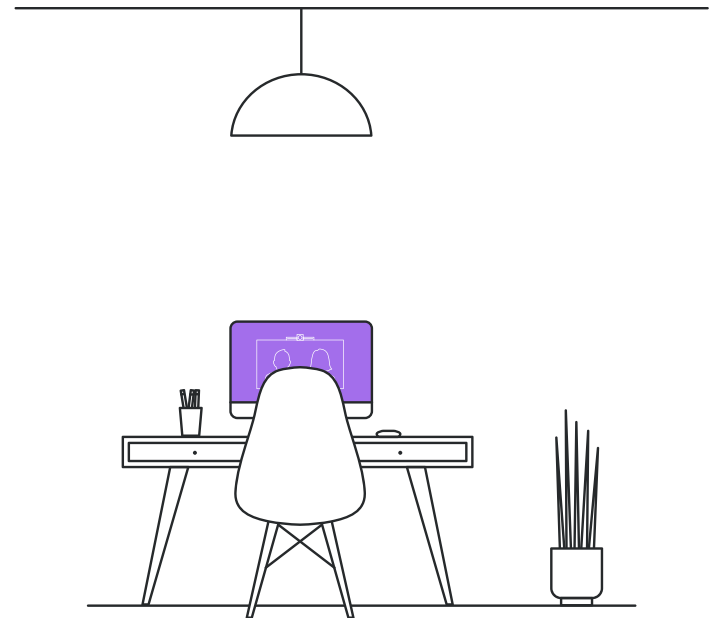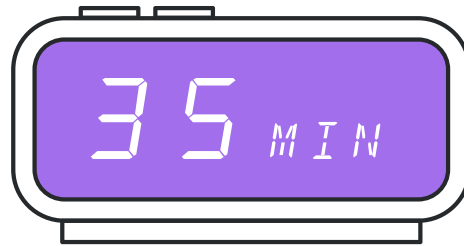
Video empowers us to communicate face-to-face, and much more efficiently than by emails, texts, tweets and emoticons. In short, *video is a game changer*.
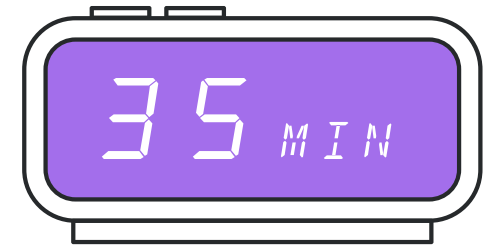
# Focus on this: It's all about video
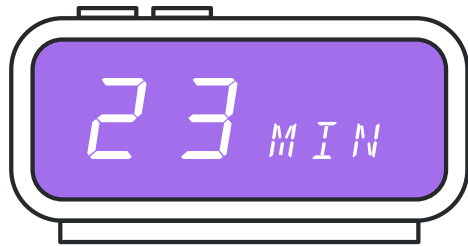


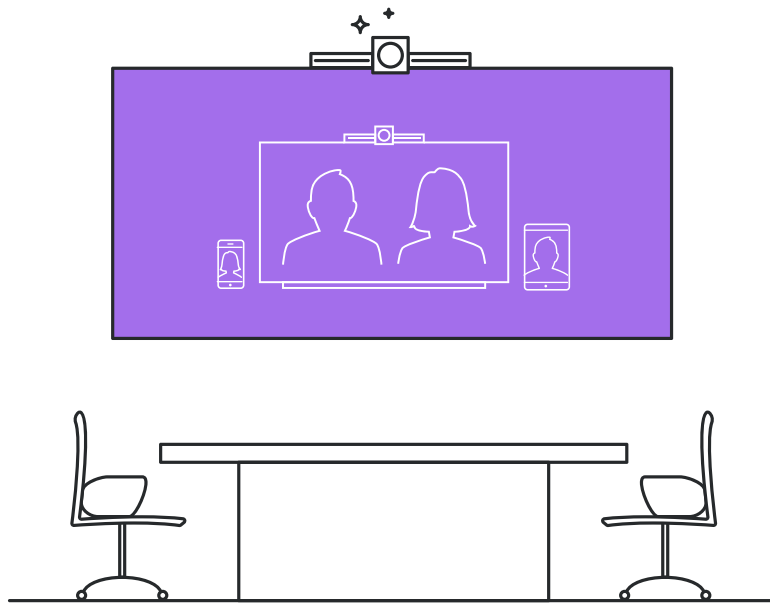Average attention span of people
on an audio conference call

Average attention span of people
on a video conference call

Average attention span of people
in 1-on-1 in-person meetings

*Source: http://www.mobileindustryreview.com/2011/02/why-your-teleconferences-are-absolutely-rubbish-its-all-about-video.html*

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# It's a good thing times are changing

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then video is priceless. However, video has historically been plagued by certain issues, namely being ridiculously expensive and insanely complicated. Most of the legacy video units require a Master's from MIT to operate, or at least a Bachelor's. There are cables, cords, channels and controls, not to mention a handy 344-page manual and technical certification course. And woe to the technology-challenged person who dares to touch the control panel – a guarantee for mass chaos. Worst of all, by the time you finish paying for a system, it's obsolete.

It's a good thing times have changed. Today, there's a new breed of video provider that has eliminated the debilitating problems of video's "legacy." This new breed offers HD pictures and crisp digital sound via systems that are much smaller, sleeker and actually consider and care about the user experience. Efficient and foolproof, these video solutions don't require you to hire someone to install their system or constantly perform updates. Best of all, they're extremely affordable.

# Communication is more important than ever

**i**

This year, the world's mobile workforce will reach 1.3B, or 37.2% of the total workforce.

**i**

89% of people work with people they've never seen.

**i**

96% of executives cite lack of collaboration and inefficient communication as the primary causes of workplace failure.

**i**

A business with 100 employees spends an average of 17 hours a week clarifying communications, which translates to an annual cost of about $528,000.

*Source: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140624205759-1305424-10-reasons-organizations-need-collaboration-technology-to-thrive*

# There's more to video conferencing than just video

Before you can choose the best video conferencing provider for your needs, you'll need to decide what range of solutions your organization needs. The video collaboration market is converging into three types of solutions for you to consider.

**1. Video Conferencing** — This type of video typically involves a "shared" camera in a conference room setting, however people can also connect via a PC and web browser or from their mobile devices using a dedicated app.

> Examples of Providers: Highfive; Cisco; Polycom; Lifesize; BlueJeans; Google Chromebox for Meetings

Where it shines — Great for establishing face-to-face communication; building relationships with individuals and teams; collaboration; obtaining feedback; and ensuring the message being communicated is understood.

What to watch out for — Legacy providers have a history of expensive hardware and complicated interfaces, making it hard to start a meeting on time and use the system effectively.

**2. Wireless Screen Sharing** — At the center of the table in most conference rooms, there is a fountain (or some other total mess) of cables available for people to connect their laptops and show their screens via the projector or flat screen TV. Luckily, wireless technology is a viable alternative to the problem of hoping you have the right type of connector on your PC or that you brought the correct dongle with you. With this solution, both in-house and remote meeting attendees can share what's on their screen with everyone in the meeting.

> Examples of Providers: Apple TV; Highfive; Chromecast

Where it shines — Quickly and easily share your screen with the people around you.

What to watch out for — Some solutions require that you be on the same WiFi network which can be difficult in cases where guests are only allowed on guest networks. Bluetooth based solutions avoid this problem. Some solutions are OS and platform dependent.

**3. Web Conferencing** — This type of video is accessed by employees via their computer or mobile device.

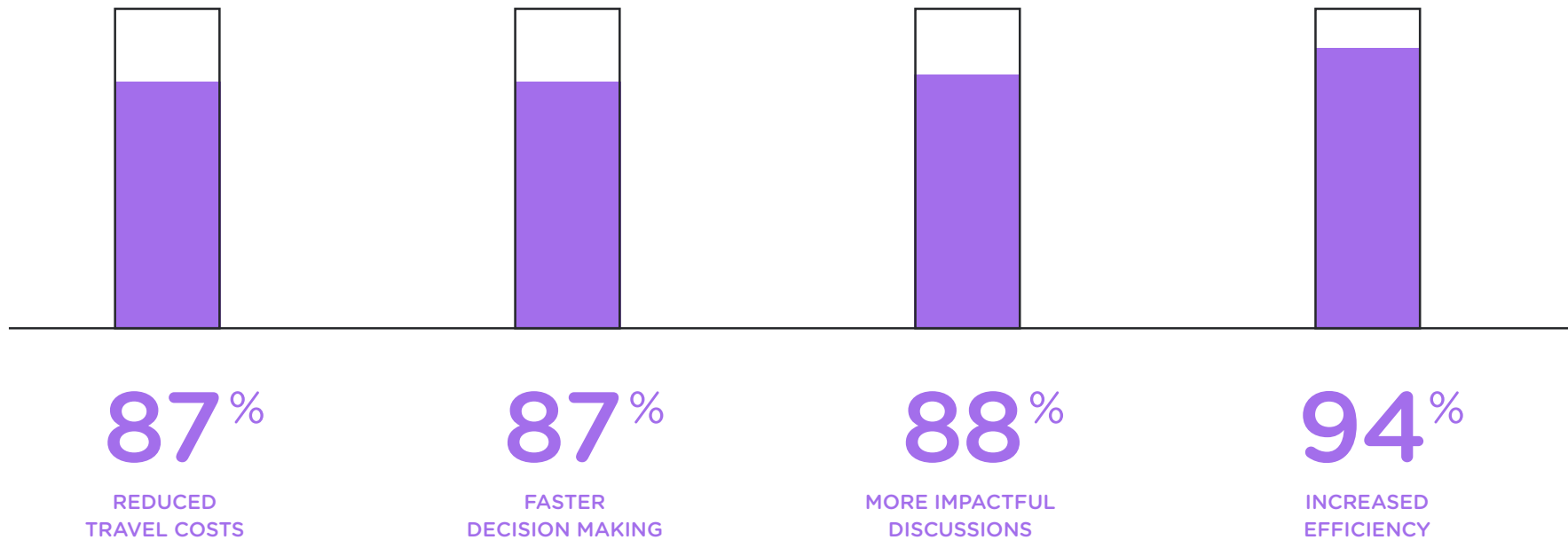> Examples of Providers:  Highfive; WebEx; GoToMeeting; Join.Me, ReadyTalk

Where it shines – Good for face-to-face meetings between a small group of people in different locations, quick impromptu meetings, or delivering large amounts of information one-way to a large group, i.e. webinars; online courses; seminars, etc.

What to watch out for – Most vendors ignore the conference room altogether and struggle to mix in-person and remote collaboration; Without being able to connect to a common in-room camera, people in the same conference room stare at their laptops, instead of interacting naturally with attendees sitting at their table.

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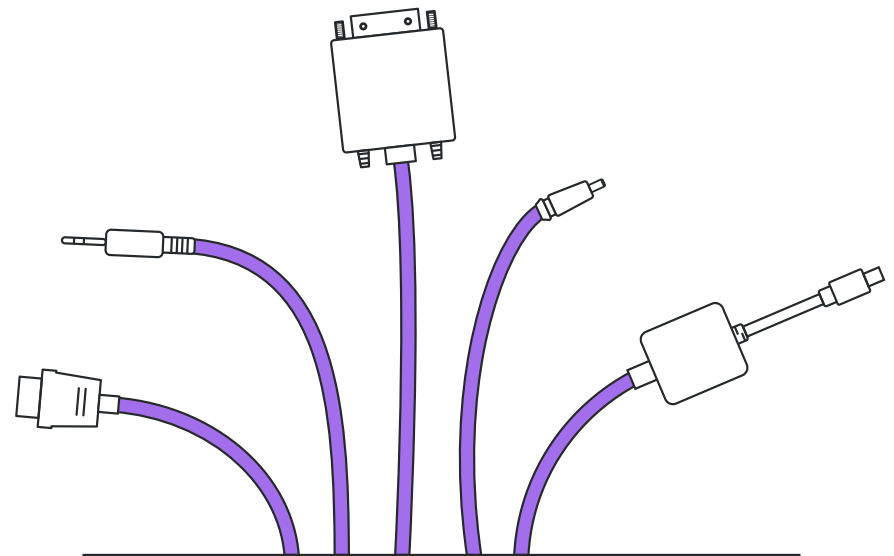
# What benefits are people looking for in video conferencing?

A global survey asked nearly 5,000 video conferencing users, representing a broad spectrum of company sizes and industries, to rank the top benefits of video conferencing:



**87**% 
REDUCED 
TRAVEL COSTS

**87**% 
FASTER 
DECISION MAKING

**88**% 
MORE IMPACTFUL 
DISCUSSIONS

**94**% 
INCREASED 
EFFICIENCY

*Source: http://www.imcca.org/news/new-research-finds-use-of-videoconferencing-growing-as-an-enterprise-productivity-tool*

# Know your end users

Video in all its forms can be incredibly powerful. However, there's a secret you should know: video is only as powerful as the audience who is willing to engage with it. As many a network executive has learned the hard way, your show may be adored by the critics, but if no one's watching, you're in real trouble.

**What to do?** Always think of your audience first.

Start by asking yourself, as well as a small and trusted sampling of your intended end users these questions:
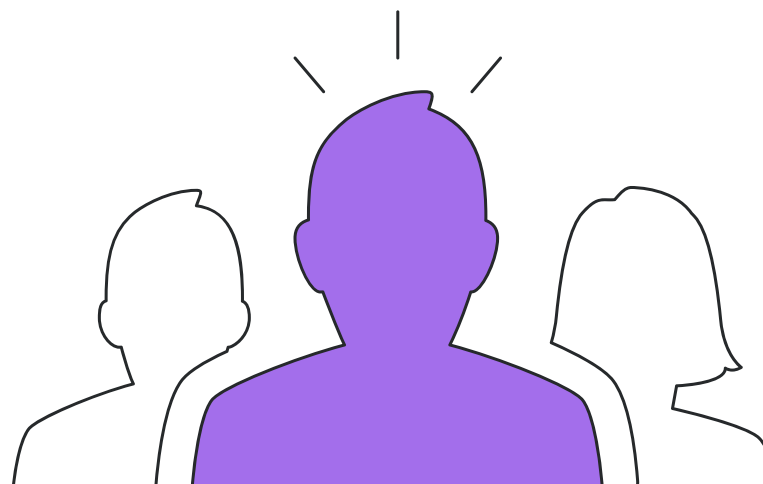
1. Who will primarily be using this solution? Internal (employees, executives), external (customers, clients, contractors) or a mixture of both?

2. How easy does the video technology need to be in order for them to use it?

3. How much training do end users need to use the system?

4. What features are essential for them to have a good experience?
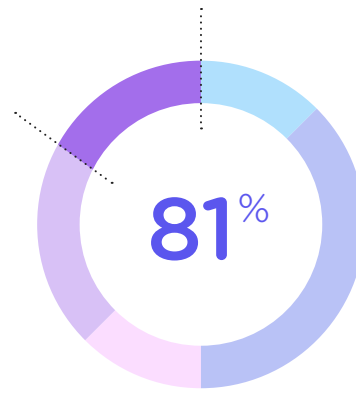
# We're social creatures, and seeing is believing

**CultureWizard** recently conducted a survey of virtual teams and learned that the greatest challenges they faced included:
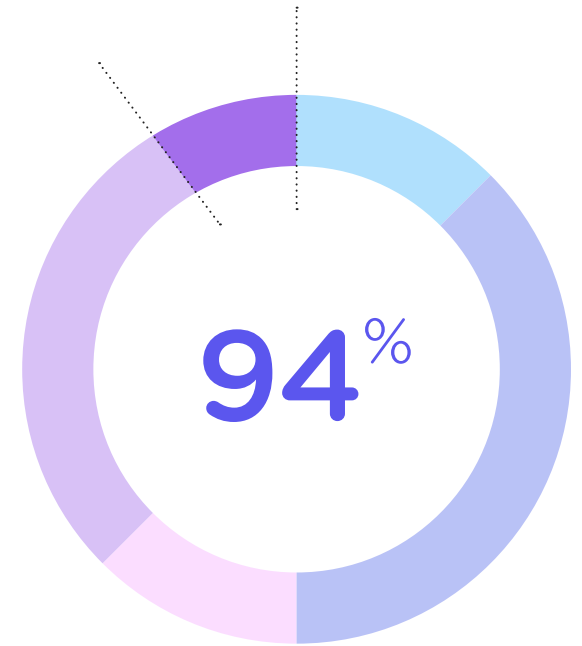
**94**%

**Inability to read non-verbal cues**

**66**%
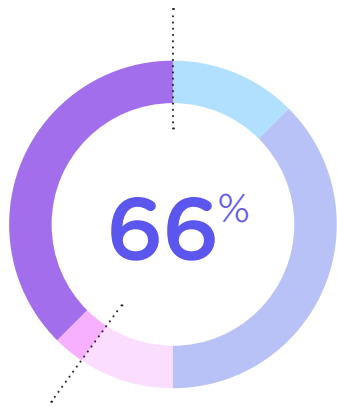
**A sense of isolation**

**68**%
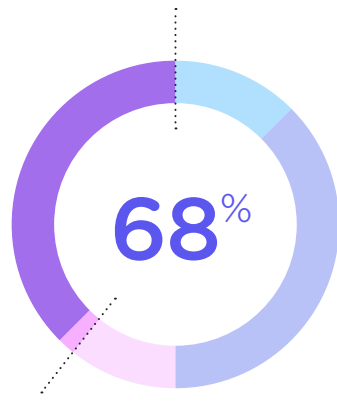
**Reliance on email and telephone**

**81**%

**Difficulty establishing rapport and trust**

In every one of these cases, if the respondents from these virtual teams had been given access to video, their challenges would have been greatly diminished, if not completely eliminated.

*Source: http://rw-3.com/VTSReportv7.pdf*

# Understand how video will be used in your company

Once you've got a big picture understanding of who your end users are, it's time to make a list of how they could use video. Ask your end users. Tell them to go ahead and dream big. The world of modern video offers near limitless possibilities.

A few examples of how your colleagues might make video work for them include:

**1.  Interviews** — Empower HR to find new hires and eliminate unqualified candidates faster through video interviews. Video also enables you to expand your talent pool while minimizing travel expenses.

**2.  IT Help Desk** — Give IT the power and ability to fix problems remotely by diagnosing and solving issues via video. Fast and efficient, this method also eliminates the costs and hassles of in-person troubleshooting.

**3.  Sales Presentations** — Enable your sales team to pitch like pros through face-to-face video meetings with prospects that enable them to quickly switch between video and screen-sharing.

**4.  Standups** — Bring the team together daily or weekly to coordinate projects and tasks. You can knock out a lot of work much faster face-to-face than over email. Plus, it gives the team a chance to build trust and strengthen relationships.

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. For 25 unique and exciting ways your company can make the most of video, check out our ebook:

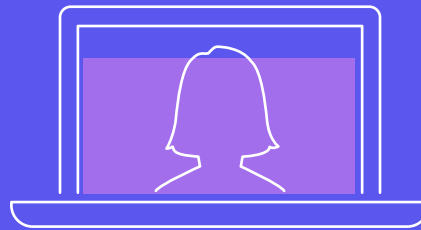"Connected: 25 Ways to Create a Connected Culture — The How-To Guide for Video Conferencing"

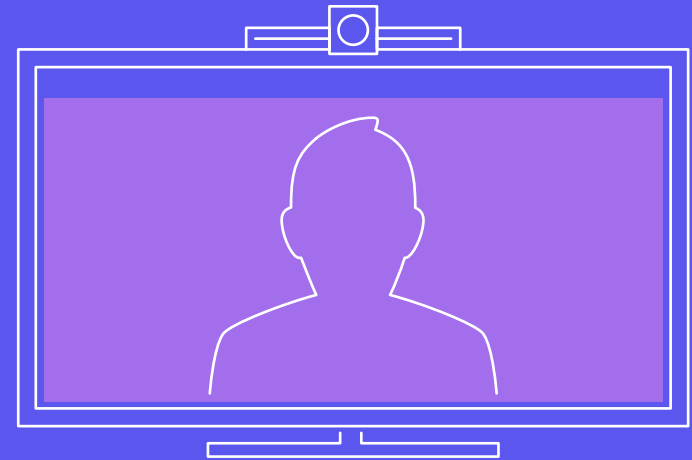DOWNLOAD NOW

# Hire video for the job of improving interviews

**74**% 

of recruiters say video interviews make their jobs easier

**85**%

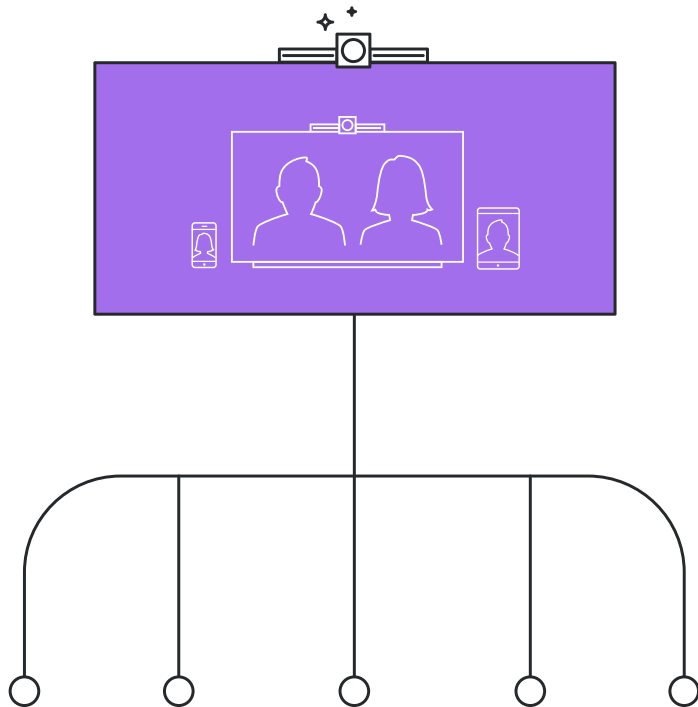of hiring managers say video interviews save them money

**90**%

of recruiters say video interviews reduce the time spent filling positions

*Source: http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/229110*

# Is your infrastructure ready for video?

Before you launch the perfect video system, make sure it's perfect for your infrastructure.

To ensure your system operates at peak levels with no embarrassing lag time, check the speed of your network. HD video usually requires at least 2.5 megabits per second (Mbps), but this fluctuates based on usage. For example, simply walking through a presentation will usually take less bandwidth than a joint viewing party of Game of Thrones.

Other variables you need to consider include things like how your office is currently wired, and whether you want to use existing TVs and projectors or purchase new ones. You'll also need to take into account the variety of conference room set-ups at your organization.

And of course, don't forget to consider all the different ways your employees currently use huddle and meeting rooms. To that end, you'll want to make sure the solution you choose enables you to be flexible in how you deploy video.

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# How to look great on screen

To make the most of your on-screen time, take a few tips from Hollywood:

- ✓ Use flattering lighting.

- ✓ Keep the camera lens clean.

- ✓ Clear clutter from the set.

- ✓ Wear solids and subdued prints. Busy prints create blur effects.

- ✓ Don't fidget or check your phone under the table.
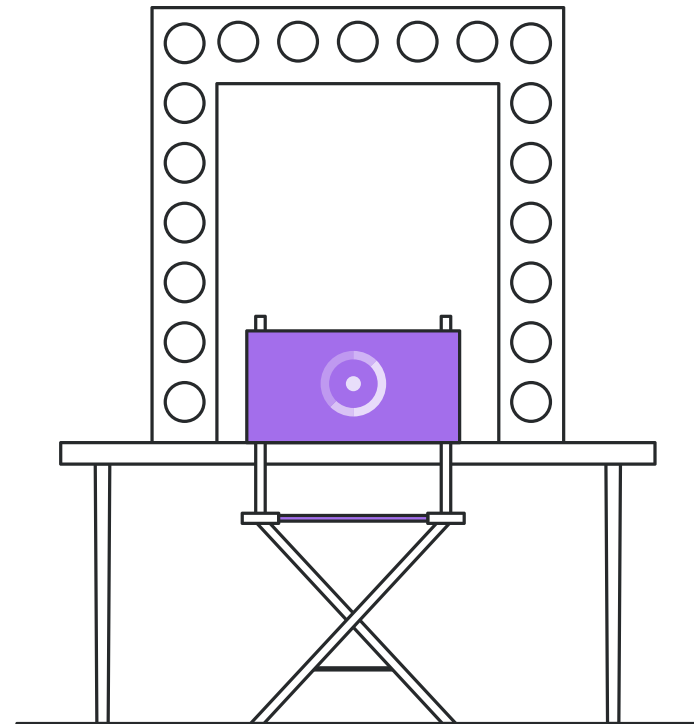
# Calculate ALL of the costs

There are three main drivers of direct and indirect cost for any video solution. Before you make any decision on a provider, it's critical to know how each provider addresses each type of cost to owning and operating a video conferencing solution.

**1. Upfront Costs** – This is the one-time purchase price and should include the cost of all necessary equipment, software (if applicable) and any installation. Legacy on-premise providers typically require very large upfront costs, forcing customers to put up huge capital project investments.

**2. Recurring Costs** — Some video systems are subscription-based and charge a small monthly fee based on the number of users. Others may require organizations to purchase an annual license, which can be costly if a company is required to buy licenses for employees who only use video occasionally or rarely. In either of these scenarios, you'll want to make sure you have a system that's scalable and can grow with your company. You should only pay if you are receiving value.

**3. IT Overhead & Support Costs** — Traditional executive conference room systems are the most expensive, since they typically involve complex, on-premise equipment and a dedicated IT staff to perform maintenance and updates. Software and cloud-based systems generally require less IT support to perform updates and maintenance. The harder the system is to use, the more your IT staff will need to support and train end users.

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# Ask every video provider these questions

Now that you've examined your end users' needs, the company's needs, what your infrastructure will allow, and how much each type of system will cost, it's time to test the waters.

**1** Start by making a list of your top three to four contenders.

**2** Next, make a list of questions that are important to you — we've included a few here to get you started.

**3** Then, contact a sales rep for each company and start asking questions.

**4** Once you have all the answers, compare them with the responses from the other companies. If it's a close race, consider doing a 30-day trial of your two front-runners and then decide based on the experience and support.

### Questions to Ask Video Provider Reps

☐ How long does it take to learn to operate your system?

☐ Does your system require training for employees to use it? If so, how is it deployed?

☐ How quickly can I set up and deploy your system?

☐ What guarantees do you offer?

☐ How do you support your customers?

☐ How much maintenance am I responsible for with your system?

☐ Can you give me examples of how your system is better than (insert name of other company you are considering)?

☐ References are important to me. I'd like to talk to a customer who loves your system, as well as a customer who has had an issue with your system that you resolved.

**DOWNLOAD CHECKLIST**

# You're now on your way Highfive!
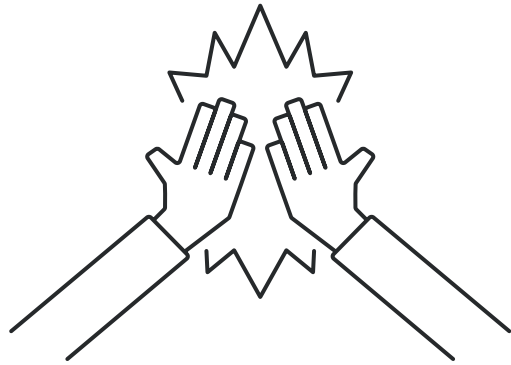
Thanks for reading our latest ebook. We sincerely hope it helps you make the right choice for your organization. At Highfive, we design video conferencing solutions for every room and every person. To experience for yourself, sign up for a free trial. Or talk to a member of our sales team by calling 844-464-4445.

View an online demo

LEARN MORE

Sign up for a free trial

SIGN UP NOW

# About Highfive

Highfive is a fast growing technology company that makes beautifully simple video conferencing hardware and cloud software. Highfive's flagship all-in-one video system delivers high quality enterprise video conferencing to any size conference room at a fraction of the cost of traditional products. Highfive also provides web conferencing and screen sharing functionality for personal devices, giving customers the ability to make one-click video calls and share their screens from their laptops, tablets, and mobile devices. Highfive is based in Redwood City, CA.
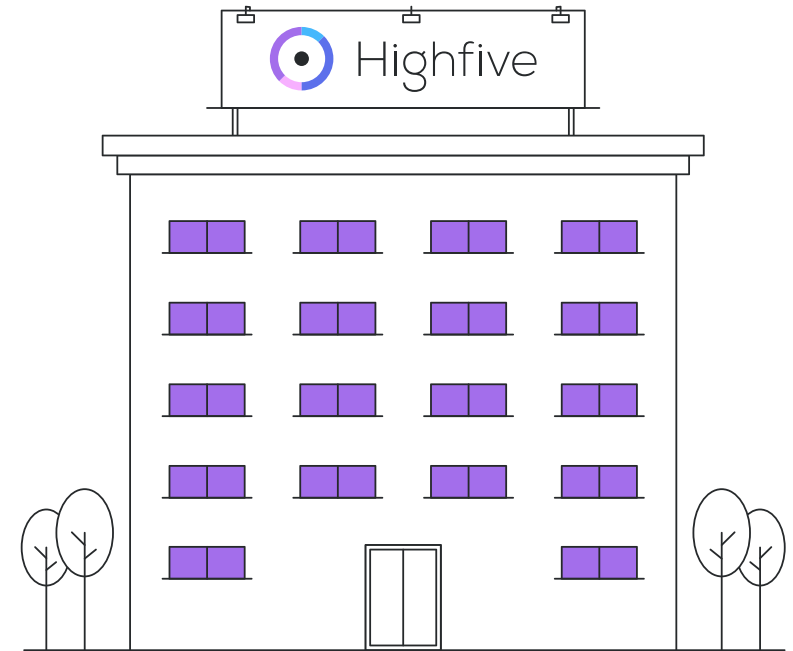
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                  Drink Creatively   The power of talk