

Finding the Right Video Conferencing Partner in a World of Technology Vendors

A practical framework for selecting a video conferencing solution for the next phase of the modern workplace

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Yesterday and Today: Video Conferencing Proves its Value

Even before the pandemic arrived in 2020, video conferencing was becoming a vital tool for the modern workplace. At a business level, video conferencing has shown it could help with organizational goals such as engaging employees, cutting costs, and enabling better communications. For individuals, video conferencing was recognized as driving productivity by adding a richness to meetings. In a Wainhouse Research survey of 1,400 respondents, the highest expectation for video conferencing was that it would help them work more efficiently.¹ They envisioned the face-to-face interaction to inspire more thoughtful collaboration, to drive clarity of communications, and to create more realistic human connections. All of these reasons, in turn, were thought to improve the outcome of the meeting.

This expectation for better meetings applied to every workspace. From personal desktops to room-based solutions equipped with AV devices, video conferencing was helping teams increase the productivity of meetings, no matter where a colleague was located.

But, the real potential for video conferencing was put into the spotlight at the start of 2020. By April, only a few weeks into the COVID-19 pandemic, Europe's work-from-home population went from about 5% of the workforce to approximately 40%, an 8X increase.² Likewise, in the United States more than two-thirds of US workers were now working from home.³ Employees were trying to stay in touch with colleagues, while executives were trying to keep their businesses moving forward. Unsurprisingly, the world turned to video conferencing to navigate these uncharted waters, and the adoption of video conferencing, which was already making headway in today's enterprises, was accelerated by five to eight years.

Without a doubt, video conferencing is entering a new age of importance. For many enterprises, video is evolving from just automating the business to actually being integrated into the business, possibly even *being* the business.

How Did Your Video Conferencing Solution Fare During This Timeframe?

Fueled by the dramatic increase in end-users and unexpected use cases, IT decision makers (ITDMs) were able to see how their chosen solutions for video conferencing adapted to the dynamic situation at hand. Some fared well, while others did not. What was revealed to many ITDMs is that some vendors were simply unable to deliver value in a fluid situation, where business needs were subject to change.

All is not lost. Wainhouse believes that this condensed window of transformation has allowed ITDMs to better define what they truly need from video conferencing technology. Ideally, vendors need to do more than just provide video. Instead, they need to support ITDMs as a trusted technology *partner*, one that can help businesses thrive in the "next normal" of our modern work experience.

What is a video conferencing technology partner versus a vendor? At the simplest definition, it is when a vendor meets more than just the basic specifications (e.g., video and audio and a certain price point) and contributes to more of your elevated goals.



WHAT DO YOUR END-USERS EXPECT FROM VIDEO CONFERENCING?

In a 2019 Wainhouse survey, end-user's highest expectation for video conferencing was that it would help them work more efficiently.

Sounds good, but how can an ITDM act upon this lofty distinction? It's not like you can add to your RFP "vendor must create value for the business" and expect to receive actionable responses. To this end, Wainhouse has created the following framework to help bring these grand ideas into a practical, achievable reality.

The Key Stakeholder Framework for Selecting a Video Conferencing Solution

Although every organization is different, in Wainhouse's experience, the first step in vendor selection is to filter your options with an efficient first line of validation before focusing time and energy on a more in-depth analysis. To this end, Wainhouse has designed a key stakeholder framework to help ITDMs understand when a video conferencing vendor meets basic specifications on paper versus when they exceed those known requirements and perform more like a trusted partner.

To accomplish this, our framework helps you assess the capabilities of a video conferencing vendor as related to the needs of four key stakeholders. For each group, we identify a core theme and propose a series of questions to help you evaluate your business needs. As you look at the framework, we encourage you to dig below the surface of immediate responses and find examples of how the vendor can deliver additional value to your stakeholders.

Most importantly, we've built this framework with the future of work in mind and, where applicable, we call out how COVID-19 will impact these stakeholders.

The four stakeholders and their core attributes are as follows: *the business* and its need to adapt, the *end-users* and their desire to be engaged, the *IT administrators* and their requirements for support, and the *IT buyer* and their job to procure.



Keep in mind that this framework is only intended to be an initial filter for video conferencing technology. But, if a candidate vendor can demonstrate how they exceed these requirements, they likely warrant further investigation.



The Business as a stakeholder – what capabilities does your business need today? How might they change in the future?

This question focuses on the capability of the partner's portfolio to address the business needs as it adapts to operational changes. It was not that long ago that all an ITDM would consider is if the vendor had solutions for small, medium, and large conference rooms. At that time, a standout vendor would also be able to address remote workspaces. But today, you need to include the option for future hybrid workspaces, which will continue to evolve as employees return to the office.

Workspace is only one possible area for rapid change. You should also understand how the devices work with your other UC investments. And, if the vendor is locking you into one video conferencing service with restrictive options to change solutions in the future.

 TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION	 VENDOR (MEETS THE REQUIREMENT)	 PARTNER (EXCEEDS REQUIREMENT)
Does the vendor have a portfolio to support a wide variety of workspaces like group spaces, huddle rooms, home office, mobile?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor has common workspace coverage but lacks products for other areas. Retrofits current products into the new workspaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has purpose-built products for home, office, hybrid, and mobile.
Do the VC devices work within my current UC solution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with my UC suites but may not be certified by the UC suite. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified by the UC suite as a solution partner.
Are the VC devices tied to a single video conferencing service or UC suite?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardware is limited to a single video conferencing service. • Vendor does not allow you to change VC services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner's hardware is out-of-the-box ready for one VC service but can be provisioned for other VC services if you choose.
What is the process to change to another VC service or UC suite?		

Key Takeaway — Look for a portfolio of room and desktop solutions with a wide-ranging price-to-performance ratio to help deliver the right solutions for the right space. If you focus only on low-cost video solutions, they may not be scalable across your organization. The features in high-end solutions may not be needed everywhere, and if used for all workspaces, this could result in overspending. ITDMs also need to be watchful for VC service “lock-in,” where devices are only capable of working with limited video conferencing services.



DO YOU NEED UC FLEXIBILITY?

Wainhouse 2019 survey of IT decision makers, most large enterprises revealed they had **three or more distinct meeting-solution vendors** in their environment.



End-users as a stakeholder – what will it take to drive usage of these solutions?

This line of questioning is focused on the end-users and addresses how to engage this group and accelerate the adoption of video conferencing technology. In many instances, it boils down to whether the solution is approachable to the end-user.

 TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION	 VENDOR (MEETS THE REQUIREMENT)	 PARTNER (EXCEEDS REQUIREMENT)
<p>How familiar is the end-user with the brand?</p> <p>Do they have firsthand experience with other products from this vendor?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-users may know the brand, but do not use it in other areas of their work. • For example, they only see the brand in large conference rooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-users know the brand because they see and use it in different workspaces – both in the office and when working remotely.
<p>How much training or instruction is needed for a first-time user to get started?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The user interface (UI) is unique to the room solutions, and therefore, requires some training to drive familiarity. • The vendor reinforces instructions with in-room or onscreen instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner devices utilize native user interfaces for the video conferencing service you choose. • As a result, room solutions require little to no training because workflows for tasks such as start a meeting or share content are common in both desktop and room use cases.
<p>What does the end-user need to do to adjust the audio or camera for different meeting conditions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor products provide manual adjustment options during the call or utilized auto-adjusting technology, but it is noticeable to the meeting participants. • Examples include jumpy camera adjustments or uneven microphone levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner devices incorporate “smart” technology that makes the adjustments automatically. • Examples include cameras that auto frame for the group in the room with smooth transitions, or beamforming microphones that can hear everyone equally.
<p>In the rooms, what are the different devices available for an end-user to control a video conference call?</p> <p>Are they approachable or intimidating?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room control is limited to a single option like a remote control. • Often, all of the actions driven by the remote control are visible on the monitor to the entire room, creating a tense situation for the person who is manipulating the remote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting leads are presented with several options to manage the meeting, including a tabletop control, which makes meeting management actions more discreet and hidden from the entire room.

Key Takeaway – Approachability of video conferencing hardware is a fundamental expectation here. Expect devices to be familiar and intuitive in how they work. In addition, room solutions should provide ample ways to control the systems, like through tabletop controls or personal devices.

More importantly, the workflow and user interfaces should be similar between the different video conferencing spaces. From desktop to the conference room to mobile workspaces, a good technology partner will enable common interfaces so end-users can confidently utilize the technology.

COVID-19 Context – As employees head back to the office in hybrid work arrangements, there is increased attention to safety and hygiene. In conference rooms, this can be accomplished through device features such as intelligent cameras and voice controls that reduce the need to touch shared surfaces. If these features are important to your stakeholders, be sure they also meet the criteria of being approachable.



DO ENGAGED EMPLOYEES MATTER?

A study conducted by the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School found that organizations with above-average employee engagement experienced **2.3 times more revenue growth over a three-year period** than companies with average employee engagement.



IT Administrators as a stakeholder – what will it take to maintain these solutions?

This is one stakeholder that will most likely have a well-thought-out list of requirements ready to go. Therefore, our early validation framework is not meant to dive too deep into the IT administrator's specific needs, but rather, focus on how and where the vendor could assure more operational continuity. You should also consider any hidden costs in working with the vendor to support their own solutions.

 TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION	 VENDOR (MEETS THE REQUIREMENT)	 PARTNER (EXCEEDS REQUIREMENT)
<p>Can the vendor provide monitoring and management with native tools?</p> <p>How do the vendor's tools work with other management solutions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring is available but may have restrictive dependencies, such as on-premises solutions only. Monitoring may also require fees to enable features or expand the number of devices covered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring is available in convenient formats, such as cloud-based with no other dependencies for on-premises hardware. Features are not fee based. Partner management tools have APIs to work with other management tools.



TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION



VENDOR (MEETS THE REQUIREMENT)



PARTNER (EXCEEDS REQUIREMENT)

TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION	VENDOR (MEETS THE REQUIREMENT)	PARTNER (EXCEEDS REQUIREMENT)
What are the warranty terms for hardware replacement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor offers hardware replacement for one year or less. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor offers hardware replacement beyond one-year term.
How much physical maintenance is needed when managing the devices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices have management steps that need to be performed in person by an IT staff, such as confirmation of connections or inventory of peripherals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices are capable of reporting all status to remote management consoles and have adequate remote capability to address needed changes.
When vendor support is needed, is it a paid service? Are there time or geographic limitations to support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor provides support, but in-depth troubleshooting may require additional maintenance contracts. • Geographic coverage or business hour limitations may play into the pricing of support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides free support that is not limited by geography or tied to service contracts.

Key Takeaway – From management tools to support services and hardware replacement — all are part of the holistic maintenance programs. Use this section as an efficient means to represent your IT administrators needs to best support your VC investment.

COVID-19 Context – As an outcome of the pandemic, expect your video conferencing footprint to be widely distributed, with more remote work deployments and potentially more conference rooms. Partner maintenance programs need to not only be holistic but accessible to all your devices wherever they may be deployed.



IT Buyers as a stakeholder – what will it take to procure the technology for a distributed workforce?

Beyond just price and terms, the ideal video conferencing partner should have solutions that are procurable through a variety of purchase channels and can reach your distributed workforce. This should hold true if your end-users are in a dozen different countries or a dozen different buildings on the same campus.

 TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION	 VENDOR (MEETS THE REQUIREMENT)	 PARTNER (EXCEEDS REQUIREMENT)
Are the products available where your end-users are?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor has limited geographic availability. • Relies on multi-tier distribution or extra shipment fees to deliver products to all areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner has adequate distribution of products to match your business footprint.
Are there diverse channel options to support your IT buyer's vendor management strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only available through one type of distribution partner (VARs, for example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is available through diverse types of purchasing channels – VARs, System Integrators, specialized online retailers, even consumer or prosumer retail channels.

Key Takeaway – Be sure you can easily procure the devices in all of your geographic regions. Keep in mind that your IT buyer likely has a procurement strategy, and a partner with diverse purchase options and delivery capabilities can help this stakeholder achieve their goals, too.

COVID-19 Context – COVID19 has not only spurred incredible growth in the remote workforce but Wainhouse has seen evidence that companies are also utilizing satellite offices to lessen office density and support safe hybrid working environments. Expect an increase in locations for which your IT buyer will need to procure video conferencing devices.



DOES REMOTE ALWAYS MEAN WORK-FROM-HOME?

In Japan, a 40,000-person study conducted by the Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism concluded that **the most common location for those who worked remotely was a satellite office.**

Logitech: A Trusted Partner for Video Conferencing

Based on the key stakeholder framework, Wainhouse Research considers Logitech to be a stellar example of a video conferencing technology partner. In short, Logitech has the portfolio breadth to support any business size, whether it be a small business with a few home offices or a global enterprise with thousands of conference rooms. Their solutions are not only affordable and scalable; they deliver exceptional audio and visual video experiences, as well.

Wainhouse Research ran Logitech through the framework presented in this article and found the key highlights listed below.



Adaptability – Logitech Video Conferencing Solutions Can Accommodate Changes in the Organization's Needs

Logitech has shown over the years that they understand both personal and group use cases for video conferencing. Their devices are platform-agnostic and can be configured with a variety of video conferencing services. Moreover, they allow end-users to work within UC workflows they already know. There's no need to "forklift" in new hardware every time a new use case presents itself (like remote working), or a new UC suite is being considered.

- **Logitech has a broad portfolio of video conferencing solutions** – From the home office to the huddle room, from the desktop to the board room, Logitech has a video conferencing solution for a variety of use cases. Wainhouse is impressed not only with the comprehensive coverage of personal and group use cases, but that Logitech offers both dedicated PC-based conferencing and bring-your-own-device (BYOD) video conferencing solutions.
- **Large ecosystem of partners with earned admiration for quality** – Logitech has been a key player with industry leaders like Microsoft, Zoom, and Google for years. These trusted relationships have created in-depth industry knowledge that allows Logitech to provide an even better video experience than others with similar partner programs.
- **Works across different operating systems and video conferencing services** – The Logitech video experience is not tied to one operating system. It is compatible with top software and service platforms such as MacOS, iOS, Windows 10, and Android to support your preferred choice.



Engagement – The Logitech Portfolio Is a Trusted Name for End-Users

One of the first things that stands out for Logitech is that the brand is known at all levels of an organization. End-users are looking for brands that are pleasing to use and that address their needs, such as better lighting, camera angles, and noise reduction. Logitech is one of the few video conferencing partners who can combine user satisfaction with enterprise needs.

- **Meets or exceeds end-user expectations** – As more end-users use video conferencing solutions in their everyday work, they expect it to be flawless, comfortable, and familiar across all the places they work – home, office, and remote. Logitech has packaged its proprietary audio and video technologies to deliver a consistently high-quality experience across all of these use cases.
- **Logitech delivers experiences rather than features** – Instead of focusing on product features, Wainhouse finds that Logitech continues to reinvent video collaboration and create experiences that feel natural and familiar for every business and individual. For example, it is not about auto framing. It's about RightSense technology that lets the end-user forget about adjusting a handful of camera options and focus on the meeting at hand.

- **Simplified installation features translate into approachable devices** – Logitech has taken the idea of easy-to-install, ready-to-use conferencing products to heart. The result is a frictionless installation for IT and enjoyable experience for end-users. Multiple mounting options combined with discreet cable management features allow the devices to be conveniently located within the room and appear very minimal, clean in design.



Support – The Uncomplicated and Straightforward Nature of Logitech's Video Conferencing Devices Enables IT Admins to Provide Higher-Quality Support

Hybrid working means IT is helping out in the meeting rooms and offices they know as well as in homes and single workstations they don't. Logitech designs their products in a way that is effortless for employees to adopt and easy for engineers to support.

- **Logitech Sync provides remote management that is easy to use** – Sync is a sharp tool that allows IT staff to provision and manage conference rooms, devices, and software from anywhere. Wainhouse also likes the tool's agnostic capabilities on the video conferencing platform, which allows you to manage devices holistically.
- **Logitech has free, global support** – Not many video conferencing partners can make such a claim. From our point of view, this means that when the situation calls for the remote IT staff or even the end-user to troubleshoot devices, Logitech will provide accessible support to them anytime, anywhere in the world.



Procurement – Logitech Has Global Product Availability in 100+ Countries and Distribution with 3,000+ Resellers

IT buyers are likely to find Logitech to be one of the most straightforward video conference partners to procure. In testing of procurement options, Wainhouse was able to find purchasing options for Logitech video conferencing solutions in every country or region we checked.

- **Logitech has product availability virtually everywhere** – Products are distributed in more than 100 countries worldwide through strategic partnerships with top-tier PC manufacturers.
- **Product accessibility through multiple channels means options to meet your procurement strategy** – Products are available through numerous channels such as retail, DMRs, and VARs.

Summary and Next Steps

Remember this key stakeholder framework is intended to be an initial filter for video conferencing technology. As you can see with Logitech as our example, Wainhouse recommends this approach as an efficient way to find video conferencing partners that can help you achieve larger business objectives and goals.

Given this valuable information, it's important to do the following:

- Engage these four stakeholders early in this process
- Add more exploratory questions as they suit your situation
- Include video conferencing partners that help you achieve your business goals and objectives in the next level of your vendor review process

If you are interested in Logitech video conferencing solutions, you can start that process by visiting <https://www.logitech.com/vc> for resources and support.

¹ Wainhouse Research, October 2019

² "Living, working and COVID-19: First findings – April 2020," European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Published 6 May 2020, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2020/living-working-and-covid-19-first-findings-april-2020>

³ "Remote Work Increasing Exponentially Due to COVID-19," Netskope, Published Mar 16 2020, <https://www.netskope.com/blog/remote-work-increasing-exponentially-due-to-covid-19>



ABOUT LOGITECH

Logitech designs products that have an everyday place in people's lives, connecting them to the digital experiences they care about. More than 35 years ago, Logitech started connecting people through computers, and now it's a multi-brand company designing products that bring people together through music, gaming, video, and computing. Brands of Logitech include **Logitech**, **Logitech G**, **ASTRO Gaming**, **Streamlabs**, **Ultimate Ears**, **Jaybird**, and **Blue Microphones**. Founded in 1981, and headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, Logitech International is a Swiss public company listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange (LOGN) and on the Nasdaq Global Select Market (LOGI). Find Logitech at logitech.com, the [company blog](#) or [@Logitech](#).

ABOUT WAINHOUSE RESEARCH

Wainhouse provides in-depth research and analysis that helps you gain a clear perspective on the market, technology, and services for workplace communications and collaboration. Wainhouse analysts are industry experts in enterprise voice, video, team collaboration, and streaming applications, services, and devices. Our expertise is backed by one of the most comprehensive data sets and models in the world. Our domain expertise and market data combine to deliver in-depth forecasts, enterprise insight, and objective product evaluations that frame the industry's current state and anticipated direction. Services include syndicated market insight, custom research, and sales enablement. Content and additional detail is available at <https://insight.wainhouse.com/> and www.wainhouse.com/intro

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Craig Durr is a Senior Analyst at Wainhouse Research with a focus on Meeting Room Collaboration technologies and solutions. He provides research on market sizing and forecasts, product and service evaluations, market trends, and end-user and buyer expectations. Craig brings nineteen years of experience in leadership roles related to product development, strategic planning, P&L management, value proposition definition, and business development of security, SaaS, and Unified Communication offerings. Craig's experience includes roles at Poly, Dell, Microsoft, and IBM. You can contact Craig at cdurr@wainhouse.com.