



DESIGNING FOR INTEROPERABILITY AND INTEGRATION

Imagine how much more productive you and your team could be if while you were collaborating on a project you could escalate an Instant Messaging session to a real-time video meeting over IP, bring in a supplier on his 3G mobile phone and stream the session over the Web to those who couldn't make the live call.

That's Unified Communications. With Unified Communications, separate communication tools are integrated into one system so that they can be seamlessly used together. It combines applications and services — such as video, telephony, calendaring, Instant Messaging, Presence and Web Collaboration — with any type of communications device and multiple networks for connectivity anywhere, anytime.

Adding video to your voice and data collaboration technologies can eliminate the need for multiple user interfaces, duplicate network infrastructures and standalone management systems. The result is increased efficiency and productivity for end users as they move seamlessly from one communications device to another.

Planning your network

What does Unified Communications mean for your networks and technology professionals who support video conferencing? It means you need to build networks that will support varying types of communications systems, devices and applications, ensuring they are able to integrate.

In order to provide the best possible user experience in a Unified Communications environment, you need to provide appropriate bandwidth. Inadequate bandwidth capacity, processing bottlenecks or inappropriate network design can compromise mission-critical applications and negatively affect the adoption of video and other communication tools.

You may need to conduct a network assessment as part of your video conferencing planning. If you take a long-term view of your network needs at the start of a video engagement, you will be better prepared to respond to additional traffic and integration demands.

Do you need a telecom policy?

- Some organizations set bandwidth limits based on employee level or video application
- When video is mission critical for essential meetings or key personnel, the highest bandwidth possible should be available
- Take into account cost and availability when balancing bandwidth allocations

If you choose to set a telecom policy, you will need to communicate it to your video users. Rules for bandwidth usage can be established within your video infrastructure. Of course, it is essential to measure and report on how well your allocation is being executed. A management system www.tandberg.com/products/tms.jsp can accomplish this for you.