

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff!

How to successfully bring videoconferencing to small conference rooms and huddle spaces

By Irwin Lazar, VP and Service Director and Lisa Durant, Research Analyst, Nemertes Research

Compass Direction Points:

- ⊕ **Employees want videoconferencing** – Employee demand is the top driver for further videoconferencing deployment. Using video to facilitate meetings can help enhance overall collaboration, reduce travel, and bring together remote and on-site workers.
- ⊕ **There are many ways to provide affordable videoconferencing** – For those seeking to keep capital costs low, take heart: dedicated room systems are not the only way to equip a room for videoconferencing. In fact, IT leaders find capital costs to be lower when deploying systems that leverage a laptop/computer and separate camera versus a dedicated room videoconferencing solution.
- ⊕ **Integration between multiple systems is crucial** – Employees use multiple collaboration solutions during meetings, including mobile devices, web conferencing solutions, and possibly multiple room systems/setups. IT leaders consider it critically important that any new videoconferencing investments integrate with these different systems.

Executive Summary

Nearly one-third of companies using videoconferencing are planning to increase deployments of videoconferencing into small meeting rooms and huddle spaces (less than six seats) to meet employee demand for broader access to video collaboration. Successful deployments align “must have” features like remote participant access, low capital costs, web conferencing integration, and wireless projection with the chosen solution.

The Issue

Organizations are struggling to meet growing end-user demand for broader access to videoconferencing, even within growing small huddle spaces and meeting rooms deployed within open workspaces. Achieving a successful rollout of videoconferencing into small meeting rooms requires aligning the chosen solution with both IT and employee needs, chief among these are the following:

- ⊕ Ubiquitous Connectivity
 - Enabling small meeting rooms to connect to larger rooms, to remote workers, to customers, and to partners, regardless of location
 - Easily integrate with web conferencing applications that support videoconferencing
 - Using conference room screens to project content from participant devices within in-room meetings, even if not using videoconferencing

- ⊕ IT Manageability
 - Minimizing capital and operational outlay
 - Deploying without on-site IT support

Those who pick small room videoconferencing systems that support these demonstrated requirements will increase their likelihood of delivering tangible collaboration improvements that improve workflows and more importantly, the bottom line.

The Challenge: Optimizing Collaboration in Open Workspaces

Improving collaboration and communication experience is especially vital as more companies use open workspaces. Without walls (and, sometimes, without formal assigned desk spaces), open workspaces dramatically change the ways in which employees work and interact with one another.

The vast majority of companies already use these new work environments to encourage collaboration. Today, roughly 11.7% of companies exclusively use open workspaces in their office environment; nearly half (49.5%) of companies use a mix of open workspaces and traditional cubicles/offices. As companies expand and create new office environments, 16.5% plan to exclusively deploy open workspaces in these new spaces, a 41% increase over current deployments, while 50.5% will use a mixture of open workspaces and cubicles/offices. (Please see Figure 1.)

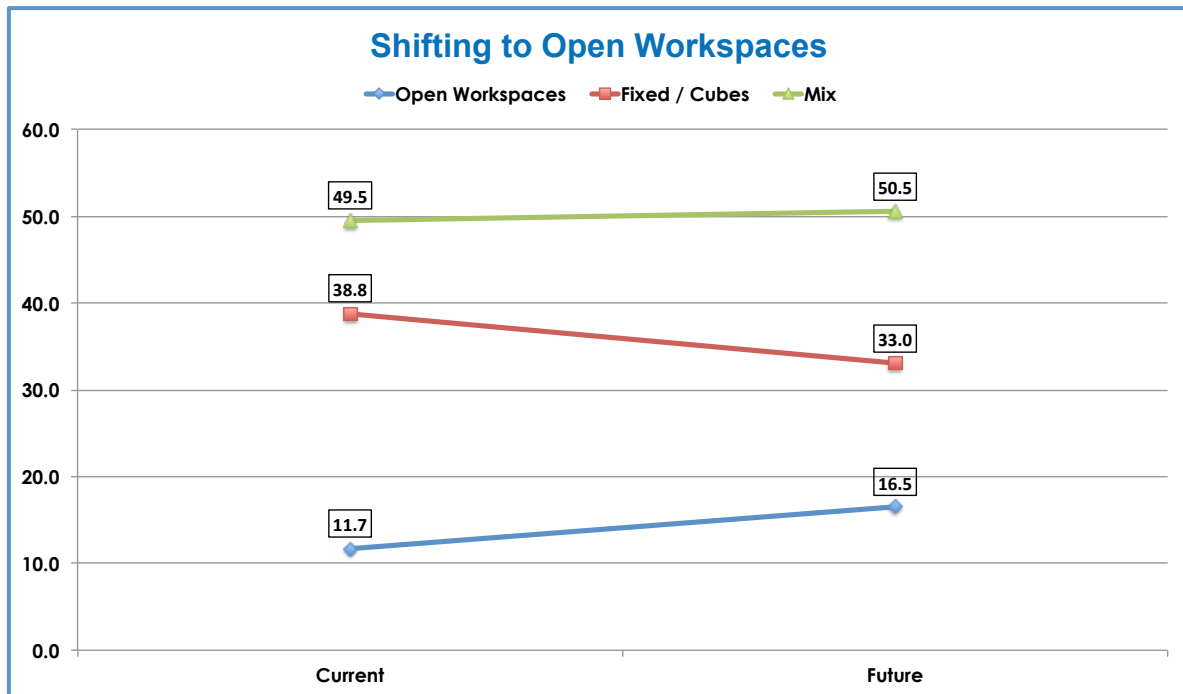


Figure 1: Current and New Office Environments

While it's easy to simply walk over to a co-worker and converse, or grab a few colleagues for an informal chat on a couch, employees still want and need access to semi-private, distraction-free spaces that are well equipped to facilitate effective meetings with both on-site individuals as well as remote participants. Thus, it is no surprise that 53.1% of those that use open workspaces offer small closed conference rooms while 42.7% use a mix of closed and open meeting spaces. Some of these closed conference rooms are then equipped for videoconferencing to provide employees

with the tools that they need to manage and attend remote meetings without needing to be at a desk.

To meet the demand for improved collaboration in huddle spaces, 32% of organizations are increasing videoconferencing deployments in small meeting rooms (defined as six or fewer seats), with a median increase of 15% planned for in 2016 (Please see Figure 2.)

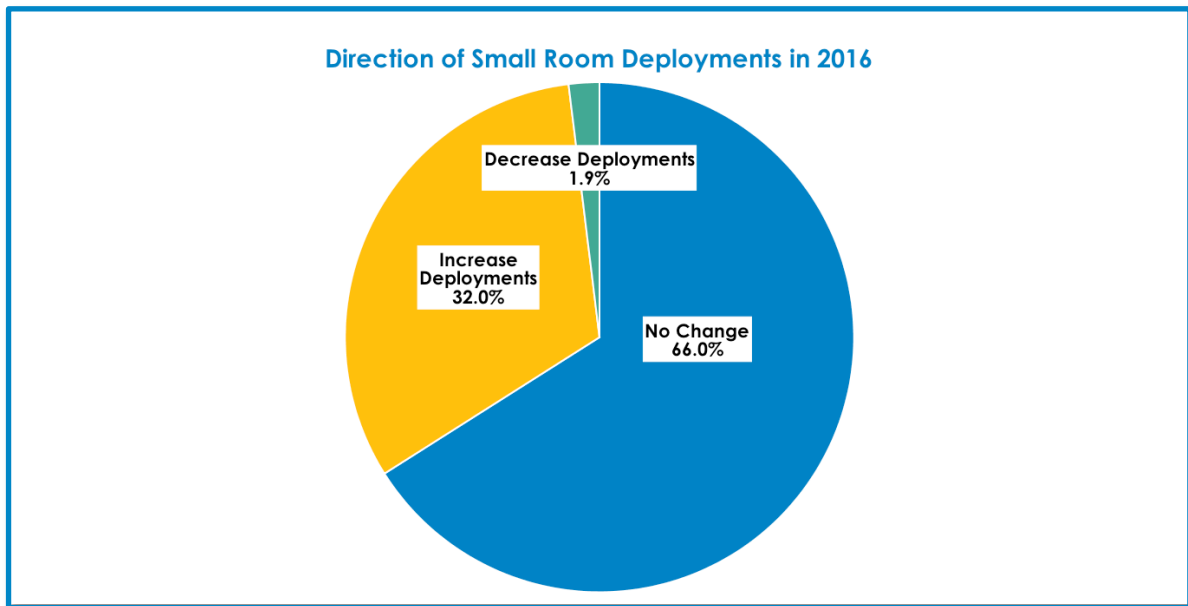


Figure 2: Direction of Small Room Deployments in 2016

Meeting Collaboration Needs

There is little purpose in investing in collaboration technology that employees do not desire and will not use. After all, one of the top measures of collaboration technology success is how often that technology is used and how many employees take advantage of its benefits. Therefore, it is not surprising that employee demand is the number-one drive for videoconferencing expansion, and that the view that videoconferencing improves collaboration ranks second (Please see Figure 3.)

Beyond just videoconferencing, workers see value in using videoconferencing to reduce travel. They also believe that modern systems, with improved quality and ease of use, and much lower costs when compared to systems of just a few years ago make videoconferencing attractive for deployment in beyond just large meeting rooms and conference centers.

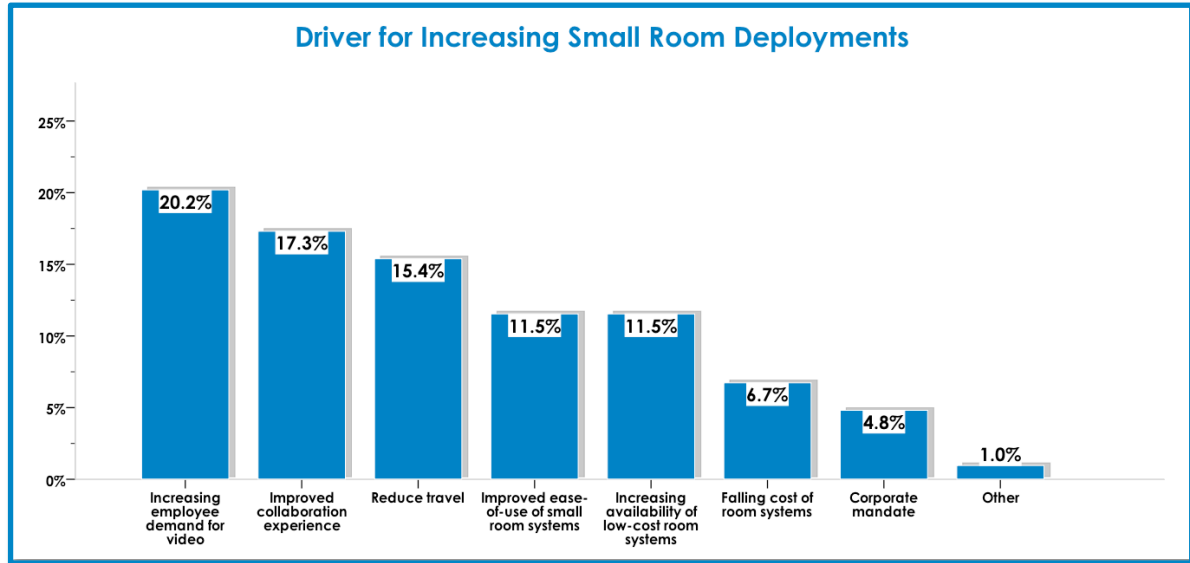


Figure 3: Driver for Increasing Small Room Deployments

Picking the Right Solution

As organizations evaluate competing solutions, they do so against a set of critical and important factors that a chosen solution must deliver to drive usage, and allow for companies to recognize tangible value from their videoconferencing investments. Key factors that workers demand include:

- ⊕ Enabling remote participant to easily join conferences from any location, even from desktop or mobile devices,
- ⊕ Integrating with other videoconferencing systems (including room and web conferencing services), both within the organization with external participants
- ⊕ The ability to wirelessly project content from participants' devices even when not using videoconferencing. This factor is especially important in small meeting rooms in offices with open workspaces as participants will use these rooms for collaborative sessions that are more effective when one person can share their laptop or tablet screen for all to see.

When it comes to setting up small rooms for conferencing, traditional room systems are not the only video options available or used in today's workplace. Many organizations use web conferencing (with built-in videoconferencing), desktop videoconferencing applications like Google Hangouts and Skype, software-based UC clients like Cisco Jabber, and Microsoft Skype for Business, and they may even have multiple other enterprise videoconferencing systems within the organization for various sized rooms. Therefore, it's important that small-room solutions work with a variety of applications. In fact, 26.2% of IT executives say integrating with larger room

systems is critical to their room videoconferencing deployment plans while 24.3% say integration with web conferencing services is critical.

Choosing the right videoconferencing solution(s) requires careful consideration of all requirements: features, support needs, spend, and integration with existing investments. Most organizations have standardized on one vendor for room videoconferencing and plan to use that same vendor for all room sizes.

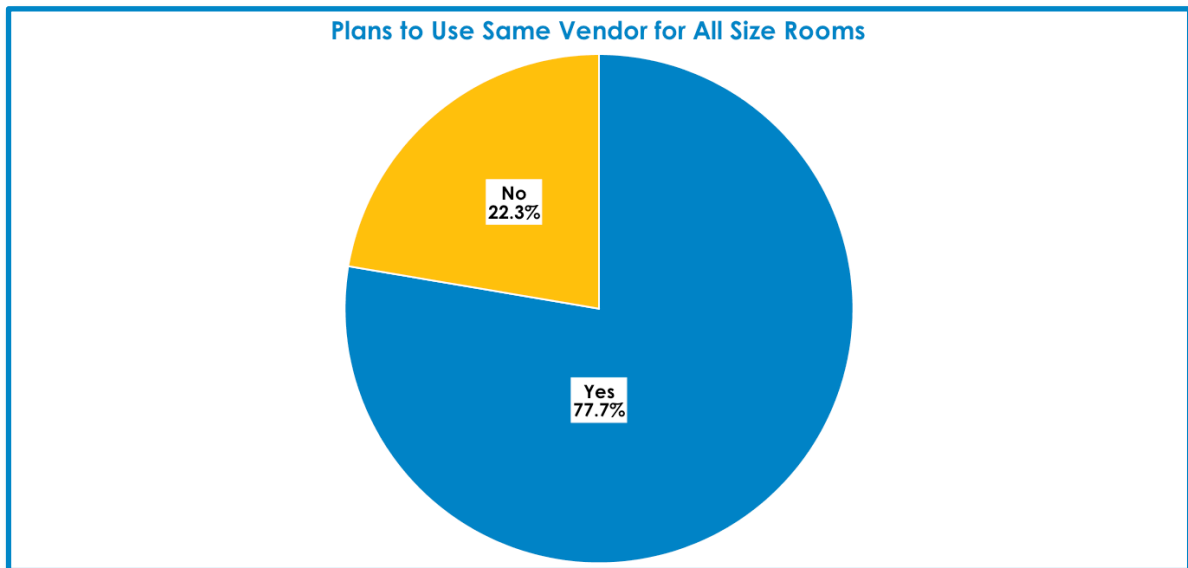


Figure 4: Plans to Use Same Vendor for All Size Rooms

However, a “one vendor” or “one deployment model” fits all approach is not always the best way to meet enterprise-wide needs. As Figure 8 shows, many use different provisioning methods to equip rooms for videoconferencing.

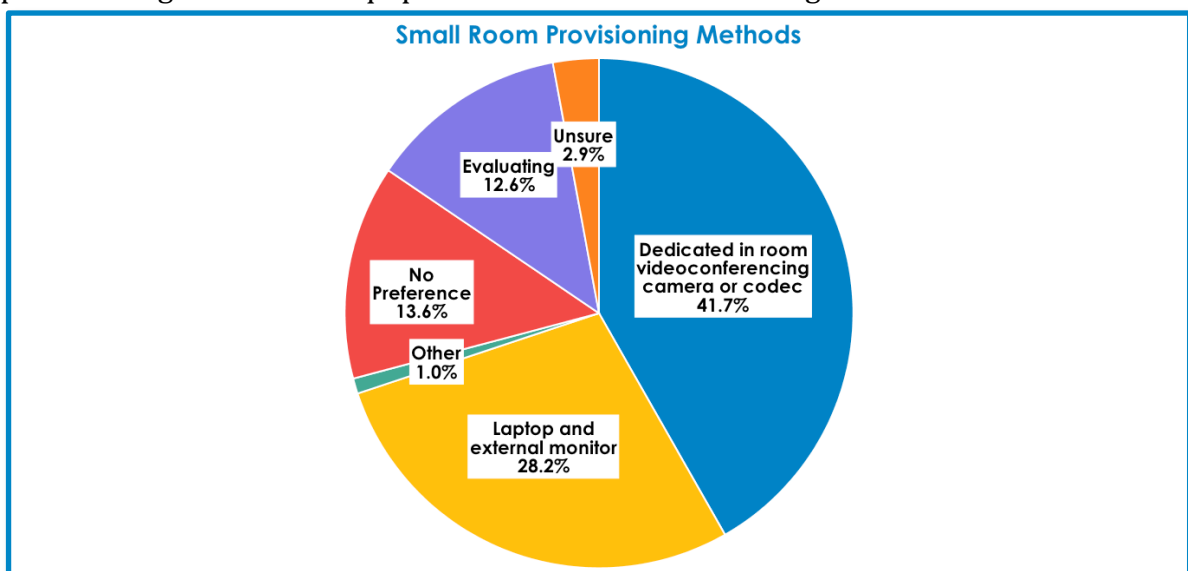


Figure 5: Small Room Provisioning Methods

Though traditional in-room solutions are popular, they are not always the preferred method for equipping a small meeting room for videoconferencing. In fact, in large organizations (over 2,500 employees) and largely distributed companies (over 250 locations), laptops and USB cameras are slightly preferred over dedicated room systems for small-room videoconferencing.

For IT leaders for whom cost is front-of-mind, PC/camera setups for small-room videoconferencing are typically the go-to deployment method. In fact, for those using this type of setup, 41.4% say capital costs of under \$3,000 per room are a critical factor in their deployment plans (Please see Figure 6.) while another 44.8% say low capital costs are important. PC/camera solutions are often cheaper to deploy than room systems; IT leaders budget a median of \$2,750 in capital costs for such a setup versus \$5,000 for a room system. Operational costs are consistent across both, which means that the company typically pays the same amount to maintain either type of setup over time.

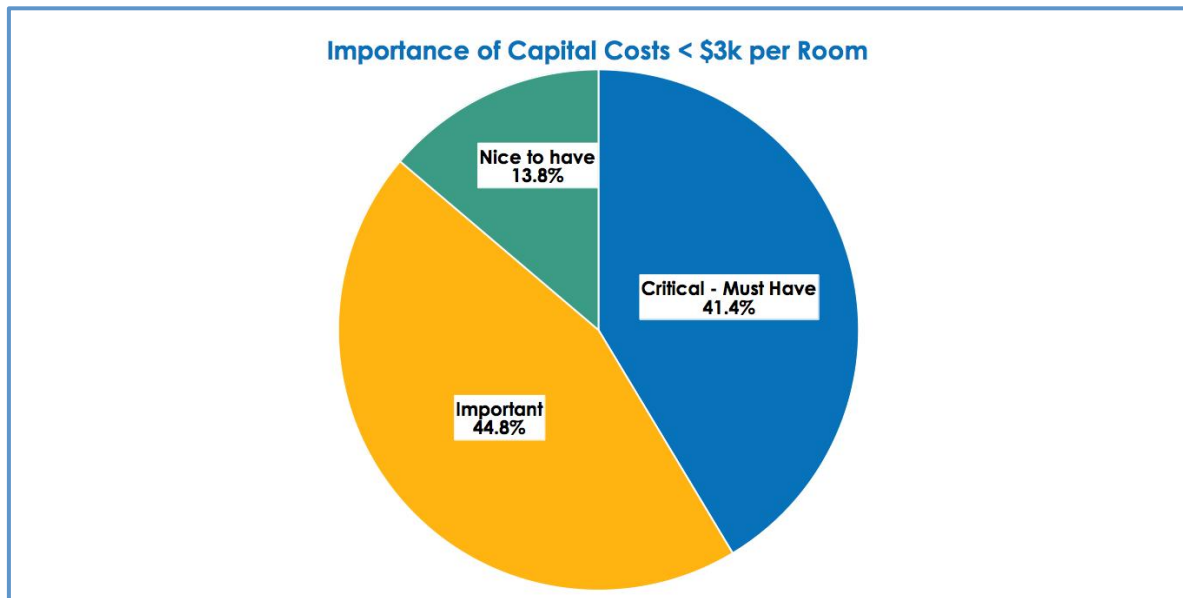


Figure 6: Importance of Capital Costs < \$3k per Room

Conclusion and Recommendations

Today's workplaces and distributed workforces require multiple ways to collaborate and communicate both inside and outside of a brick-and-mortar location. Large room videoconferencing suites are helpful, but employees really emphasize their need for other ways to hold videoconferences. In response to employee demand, IT leaders are equipping more small meeting rooms (under 6 seats) with videoconferencing technology.

Many factors influence the vendors, solutions, and provisioning methods that IT executives choose to employ for providing small-room videoconferencing. Chief among these are the ability to remotely join meetings from mobile devices, keeping capital costs low, and integrating with existing systems. IT also wants to keep its own workload manageable, so the ability to deploy these systems without on-site IT support is also high on the list of important factors influencing videoconferencing plans. To meet these demands and especially to keep costs low, many IT leaders – especially those at large, distributed organizations – choose to use computers with USB conference cameras in lieu of large room systems when equipping their small videoconferencing rooms.

IT leaders seeking to meet employee demand for more videoconferencing capabilities should consider the following best practices:

- ⊕ Evaluate whether on-premises or cloud videoconferencing solutions will best meet enterprise needs.
- ⊕ Consider existing investments and ensure that any videoconferencing system deployed will integrate with those existing solutions. This includes web conferencing, mobile, and other room systems.
- ⊕ Gather and evaluate employee requirements for videoconferencing features to ensure selected solutions are able to meet those requirements.
- ⊕ Those seeking to keep capital costs low, and who need to support a wide variety of videoconferencing systems and applications, should especially consider using conferencing systems that employ a laptop/computer and separate camera versus dedicated room systems.

About Nemertes Research: Nemertes Research is a research-advisory and strategic-consulting firm that specializes in analyzing and quantifying the business value of emerging technologies. You can learn more about Nemertes Research at our Website, www.nemertes.com, or contact us directly at research@nemertes.com.