WHITE PAPER

Why Voice Quality Enables an Effective Meeting Experience

audiocodes

“By 2024, remote work and changing workforce demographics will impact enterprise meetings so that only 25% will take place in person, down from 60% today”

Gartner’s Magic Quadrant for Meeting Solutions

THE IMPACT OF VOICE QUALITY ON ENTERPRISE COLLABORATION

The meeting experience plays a critical role in delivering effective enterprise collaboration. While perspectives vary, the shifting culture of work influences multiple disciplines -- whether you are an architect designing a new space, a business executive leading a change management initiative, and certainly a digital transformation technologist tasked with delivering continuous productivity. However, it’s easy to overlook the role voice quality plays in enabling an effective meeting experience.

In a world dominated by remote meeting participants, an organization’s ability to adopt video-enabled meeting spaces correlates directly to its competitive performance. Gartner researchers estimate that while 60% of meetings are still held in person today, remote meetings will set the new standard by 2022, when only 25% will be confined to a single shared physical space. As a result, remote collaboration is driving the new emerging priority of digital transformation in the enterprise. Embracing the future of work means empowering the entire global workforce while collaborating across multiple geographic locations.

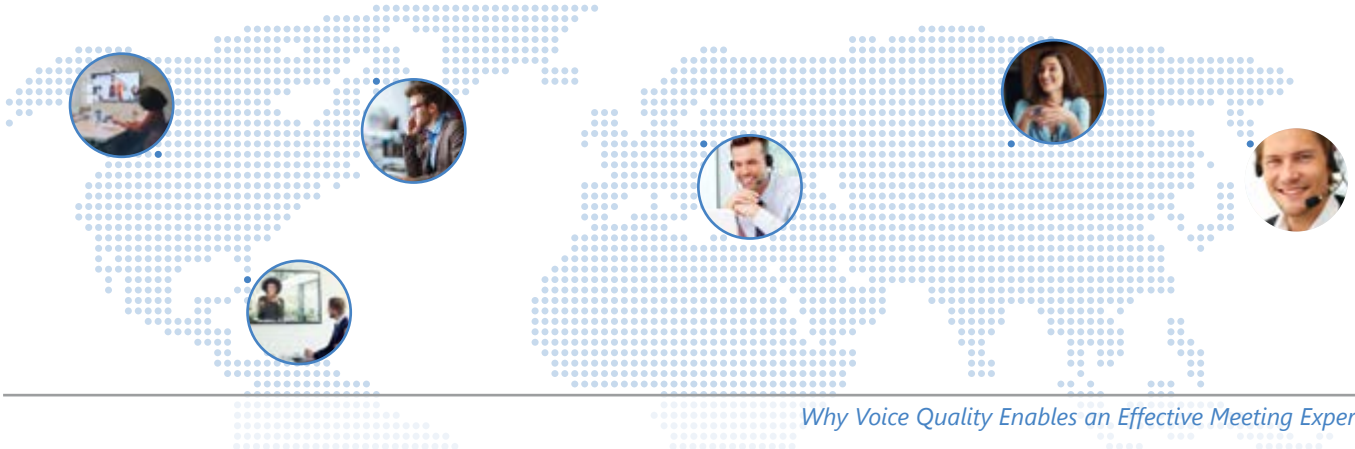
THE REMOTE MEETING EXPERIENCE IS CRITICAL TO OPEN WORK SPACES

As remote work culture permeates the global workforce, open work spaces proliferate, driving the evolution of remote collaboration requirements. Meeting participants still expect to collaborate in real time across locations that offer inconsistent access to communications infrastructure – without compromising on productivity. Accepting the new remote meeting standard means getting back to basics and making them work for everyone.

“40% of conferences are held in huddle rooms.”

Wainhouse Research

Enterprises have responded to the market need by adopting smaller meeting spaces designated as Huddle Rooms. A 2017 Wainhouse Research study suggests that as many as 40% of conference meetings are held in huddle rooms when they are made available. However, unless these rooms are enabled for audio as well as video, even spaces designated to address a growing market need will fail to deliver an effective and organic meeting experience.



A MEETING EXPERIENCE IS ONLY AS EFFECTIVE AS THE VOICE QUALITY IT DELIVERS

The very term "video conference" can be deceptive. Much like any immersive media experience, a remote meeting experience that fails to deliver clear voice quality cannot begin to approach the superior experience that is confined to a single physical space – regardless of image clarity. If remote participants are unable to follow the conversation as well as anyone else in the room – they are effectively excluded from the meeting. As more participants join a distributed team meeting space that spans multiple geographical locations, the impact of voice quality on enterprise productivity becomes crystal clear.

An effective remote meeting experience delivers high quality voice to every participant – seated or moving – as long as everyone is located within an available video-enabled room.

Voice quality is the centerpiece of Frost & Sullivan's study highlighting inconsistent volume and noise as the top issue 52% of respondents listed as the primary barrier to effective video conferencing in huddle rooms. While the study estimated the number of huddle rooms in 2019 exceeded 32 million, less than 2% of these designated rooms were video-enabled. The pain represents a case in point for the emerging imperative of video-enabled meeting spaces as a driver of digital transformation.

No organization can remain competitive if an overwhelming majority of the workforce is not productive. Addressing the challenge means taking a closer look at the basics of the remote meeting room experience, **starting with voice quality**.

"32.4 million huddle rooms worldwide and less than 2% percent are video-enabled."

Growth Opportunities for Video Conferencing in Huddle Rooms, Frost & Sullivan

NOT ALL ROOM CONFIGURATIONS ARE CREATED EQUAL

The challenge of a remote meeting experience begins with room configuration, including room size, acoustic design, and technology enablement for audio and video. Without addressing all three holistically, remote participants will continue to be excluded from the conversation.

ROOM SIZE

A single speakerphone installed in a large conference room will typically fail to transmit the voices of those participants seated beyond the device's reception range. Such large conference rooms often require multiple devices to cover the entire space. Even then, dynamic audio leveling capabilities are critical to compensate for multiple on-site participants speaking into the receiving device across varying distances.

ACOUSTIC DESIGN

A straight-angled box shaped room with bare glass walls may work for anyone present on-site, but the acoustics will also generate distracting echoes that the human ear filters out as noise organically, while most microphones transmit that noise as part of the signal to remote participants. Although many rooms are designated as meeting spaces with appropriate sound absorbing materials, very few are sound proof. As a result, background noise from beyond the meeting room's confines (such as loud chatter or ongoing refurbishment) is transmitted to remote participants, further detracting from the meeting experience.

TECHNOLOGY

The emerging priority of huddle rooms highlights the new imperative to enable the remote meeting experience as the driver of collaboration in the enterprise. Even when rooms are designated as remote meeting spaces, enabling them for audio and video is contingent upon wiring and wireless infrastructure, peripherals, and devices with built-in compute power to support a seamless meeting experience.

VOICE QUALITY IS IMPLICIT TO AN EFFECTIVE MEETING EXPERIENCE

Focusing on video enablement of the meeting room experience is fundamentally misleading. While few would argue video enhances the remote meeting experience, everyone agrees that clear voice quality is an implicit prerequisite. As a result, the conversation around an effective remote meeting room experience often assumes video-enablement delivers voice quality by default. Still, research shows even those meeting spaces designated as huddle rooms lag behind in video enablement citing voice quality challenges among the top reasons.

VOICE QUALITY OPENS THE DOOR TO AI-DRIVEN CONTINUOUS PRODUCTIVITY

A meeting experience that delivers voice quality has implications far beyond the fundamental communications modalities familiar to humans. To capture the untapped body of content generated in meetings, artificial intelligence (AI) tools require sufficiently clear voice quality to transcribe meetings, identify speakers, capture action items and more. Empowered by this new data, participants can leverage AI capabilities to access, organize and share the key moments they need to get the job done in real time. Advanced processing capabilities enable machines to leverage the same content to generate a new layer of meta-data, predictive analytics, and actionable insights. In the age of digital transformation, voice quality of the meeting experience represents a strategic imperative to enterprise leaders.

AUDIOCODES VISION FOR ENTERPRISE PRODUCTIVITY

For over a quarter of a century, AudioCodes has enabled high quality voice communications, integrating modern infrastructure with legacy technologies to drive digital transformation in the enterprise. AudioCodes Room Experience solutions support a growing ecosystem of technology and channel partners. Building upon an expanding portfolio enabling Unified Communications platforms and supported by market leaders Dolby and Jabra, the unique suite of meeting room experience solutions offers the highest level of voice quality. Together, we deliver a unified meeting experience for every participant - regardless of physical location.

About AudioCodes

AudioCodes Ltd. (Nasdaq: AUDC) is a leading vendor of advanced voice networking and media processing solutions for the digital workplace. With a commitment to the human voice deeply embedded in its DNA, AudioCodes enables enterprises and service providers to build and operate all-IP voice networks for unified communications, contact centers and hosted business services. AudioCodes' wide range of innovative products, solutions and services are used by large multinational enterprises and leading tier one operators worldwide.

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