Enterprise Video Drives Internal Communications

**Best Practices for Corporate Communications -
Engage and Empower Employees**

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Social media, apps, devices, video, and Internet of Things (IoT). Is there anything that gets more attention? We continuously read and hear about new and innovative technology that lets people access content anywhere, anytime and enables them the ability to share content and interact with peers and others when and as needed.

Companies are using 'all things video' to communicate, educate, and inform. This includes videoconferencing, webcasting, and distribution of video over their proprietary, enterprise video networks and digital signage systems. Also, they are using streaming services from Periscope, Meerkat, Facebook Live and others as well as chat sites that have collaborative and video capabilities, such as Facebook, Google, Slack, Snapchat, and Microsoft Teams.

Companies are using live video to conduct town hall meetings, executive briefings, collaborative sessions and interactive training. They are creating and using recorded content to extend the reach of the messages to employees who need to view it at different or more convenient times, including the time and point of need. Why?

The Power of Video

Statistics show that video continues to increase as the preferred medium for individuals to consume content and that it gets companies closer to their customers.

Cisco projects that global Internet traffic from videos will make up 82% of all Internet traffic by 2020 and that consumer video-on-demand (VoD) traffic will nearly double by 2020 to the equivalent of 7.2 billion DVDs viewed per month.[1]

According to PageWiz, a company that builds landing pages, when a web page has video, 60% of visitors will click to watch the video before ever reading a word.

In its 2016 Digital Marketer Report, Experian Marketing Services finds that including the word "video" in an email subject line increases click-thru rates by 7-13 percent. Also, Experian reports that including a video in an email increased the email's conversion rate by an average of 21 percent over the use of a static image alone.

In addition, studies confirm that video plays a significant role to enhance and extend communications to employees throughout organizations.

According to Gartner Research, by 2018, 75% of workers at large organizations will interact with various kinds of video more than three times daily.[2]

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[1] *The Zettabyte Era – Trends and Analysis*, Cisco, June 2016

[2] *Critical Capabilities for Enterprise Video Content Management*, Gartner Research, February 2016

A study by Forrester Research shows that overall, employees are 75 percent more likely to watch a video than to read documents, emails or web articles.

Cisco finds that 82% of executives record their own business videos, and 64% of these executives upload recorded videos to their company's video-sharing portal. In addition, 87 percent of young executives believe video has a significant and positive impact on an organization, citing benefits ranging from enhancing the experience of telecommuters to saving money on travel costs and even attracting top talent.[3]

Cisco projects that the increased adoption of advanced video communications in the enterprise segment will cause business IP traffic to grow by a factor of 2 between 2015 and 2020.[4]

There are a number of factors driving this rush to video including: the continuous introduction of new and innovative technology and apps that expand and improve video capabilities (such as the introduction of 4K technology to capture, deliver and display video including smartphones); the significant decline in the costs for video systems and devices; and growing demand by individuals to create, share and consume video content. Also, companies are enjoying a number of benefits by embracing video. They are finding that video:

- Provides consistent, timely communications across the enterprise
- Improves employee engagement and retention
- Drives a collaborative culture
- Helps employees connect across silos
- Facilitates transparency across the organizational structure
- Can reduce or offset travel costs
- Helps bring products and services to market more effectively, quickly.

This paper provides a look at strategies companies are developing, actions they are taking, and best practices they are implementing to address the demand for, and value of, video in enterprise organizations.
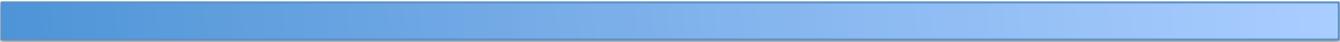
Enterprise Video Strategy

Leading companies are developing media business strategies to implement or enhance their enterprise video platforms (ecosystems) and approaches to create, deliver and track internal communications and information provided to employees. They are leveraging strategies and the same or similar technology used to market their products and services to customers, with the increasing emphasis on video, mobile devices, video apps, and large digital display screens.

The objective is to reach employees at the best time, in the right place, on the desired viewing screen, with relevant, consistent, and timely information – Make content readily

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[3] *Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI)*, Cisco, 2016

[4] *The Zettabyte Era – Trends and Analysis*, Cisco, June 2016

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available and easily accessible. This requires an effective enterprise video platform and strategy that is the foundation for a collaborative, employee-inclusive corporate culture that positively impacts morale, performance, and retention. The ultimate goal is to prepare and motivate employees to provide customers an engaging and informative experience to drive sales and improve the organization's business results.

Enterprise Video for Internal Communications

The enterprise video strategy helps define the right type and blend of communications to maximize results, which includes the use of live, live interactive, and on-demand video. The strategy should include the use of all available media channels such as videoconferencing (including group and personal systems), webcasting, streaming, and proprietary, enterprise video networks (satellite and terrestrial) and digital signage systems.

Live town hall meetings and executive briefings, as well as departmental meetings and corporate events, are some of the best, most common, uses for enterprise communications. They can be distributed over a variety of corporate media channels or via the public Internet for employees working offsite or in areas where enterprise networks are not available, using a company portal or streaming services such as Periscope or Facebook Live. The objective is to use every available channel and viewing device to reach the largest number of employees possible – maximize the reach (the digital touch points)

The live corporate meetings and events are viewed on large display screens in meeting rooms, conference rooms, break rooms, at the desktop or on mobile devices. In addition, they are recorded and made available throughout the enterprise for non-real time viewing using a variety of channels including the corporate video portals and digital signage networks.

It is common for the recorded content to be repurposed for viewing across the enterprise using any of the video channels. This may include changing video clips, enhancing graphics, or editing the content into multiple short segments or modules. With the extensive functional capabilities of today's video content management systems (VCMS), the workflow to create, curate, publish and track video content is manageable.

A key component for effective communications and the successful engagement of employees is interaction with executives or leadership. This is handled in a variety of ways, including audio interaction over the phone, via direct dial or audio bridge, or the Web connection. Also, interaction is conducted using email, text and chat features.

Leading companies have enterprise video networks with extensive functionality to leverage live and on-demand video communications across the enterprise, including the ability to share content among peers and incorporate video into adjunct meetings and collaborative sessions. The objective is to make the content readily available and easily accessible for all employees, regardless of their work environment.

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Following are a few examples on how companies are using video to provide, improve and extend corporate communications.

Town Hall Meetings

Live town hall meetings have been a reliable means of corporate communications for decades, beginning with proprietary satellite business television networks in the early 1980s. Today, they are conducted by most organizations over multiple media channels, reaching many, if not most, employees live or on-demand at a later, more convenient time.

A major retailer conducts company-wide town hall meetings on a quarterly basis, featuring C-level executives. In addition, company executives hold other regularly scheduled business unit or departmental meetings and executive briefings. Employees find the meetings and opportunity to interact with the executives to be the foundation of a transparent organization. Employees who are unable to attend the meetings live are able to view key segments, or the programs in their entirety, over the company's digital signage network and video portal.

A large financial organization uses its enterprise video network frequently for executive meetings and briefings to update employees on company news. The company recognizes the need to inform employees regarding business activities, prior to hearing it from the media or other outside sources.

Digital Signage

Digital signage has earned its place in the corporate sector as a key, if not critical, means for companies to provide communications throughout the enterprise. Digital signage is found to improve employee satisfaction, loyalty and performance and reinforces the corporate culture.

Display screens are located in lobbies and hallways, near elevators, and in other common areas including cafeterias and break rooms. The screens in common areas are an excellent complement to those in conference rooms, meetings rooms and training centers for live events.

Digital signage systems typically provide a wide range of content types, which are strategically displayed in specific zones of the screens, including live meetings, previously recorded messages and meetings, listings of events and activities, corporate branding and wayfinding. Also, digital signage screens are ideal for the display of recorded clips of corporate communications and messages and directing employees to other sources such as the video portal to view meetings and programs in their entirety.

The corporate content is supplemented with other information sources, such as cable news channels, weather updates, emergency notifications, community activities, social media messaging, and answers to commonly asked questions.

Digital signage networks are typically centrally managed from corporate. However, most companies find that by allowing content contributions on a local or store level there is a

higher rate of employee engagement. Also, this helps keep content fresh, relevant and timely.

A large insurance company uses different screen modes and placements to feature content types. Screens in landscape (horizontal) mode provide corporate information and upcoming events and activities. Screens in portrait (vertical) mode provide room information for meetings and locations for activities - wayfinding. All screens include a mix of corporate and commercially available news and weather content.

Another company has located additional display screens in department common areas to provide content relevant to each unique audience. The company leverages the ability to share content between the institutional and department digital signage channels.

Many companies consider display screens to be central to the overall appearance and brand of the organization, housing them in attractive floor mounts, wall casings, and kiosks. Essentially, they are the responsibility of the facilities group that often includes architects and designers in the budgeting and purchasing processes.
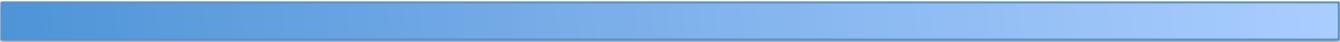
Breakroom TV

An application of digital signage that has earned a distinct name is Breakroom TV. Breakroom TV is located in employee-only areas versus common areas where the screens are visible to customers. It is especially effective for companies in retail and service industries, where employees do not have desktops or computers to access email or the company portal.

According to a study by Staples, 86% of employees believe breaks make them more productive. The Staple's study, and others throughout the industry, find that having televisions in breakrooms, along with providing free coffee, are two of the leading factors that contribute to a collaborative environment and improve the employee break experience.

The leading types of content for Breakroom TV are similar to traditional digital signage, including corporate information and third-party programming. However, break room TV often focuses more on employee topics of interest including individual profiles, achievements, promotions, birthdays, and celebrations. Also, it is used to provide information on company and store sales goals and to showcase store or departmental successes and activities throughout the community.

"An internal survey revealed that our employees want more information about the company," said Robin Everhart, Cintas' chief compliance officer and vice president of government affairs and corporate communications.[5] Cintas uses Breakroom TV at its 150 company facilities, featuring a corporate information channel, community news and activities, commercial news channels and local weather.

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[5] https://www.trsa.org/news/cintas-offer-breakroom-video-service

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A major retail chain with 1,100 stores uses Breakroom TV to provide commercial television, corporate information, and messaging on the same screen. The company also has digital screens throughout stores featuring product videos, store promotion and sales, and corporate branding.

Company Video Portal

A company video portal is an internal website that provides employees access to a variety of proprietary, enterprise-wide video content and information, live and on-demand. The portal is a gateway to a central repository of content that allows employees to navigate through a catalog of video titles and descriptions. The portal may offer other services, such as email, information from corporate databases, and third-party news, weather, and stock information.

Behind the portal is a video content management system and search engine, which may be integrated with other media channels and communication networks throughout the company. Today's content management solutions are extremely robust and user friendly, featuring extensive search and management capabilities such as metadata naming conventions and customizable catalog categories (e.g.: company, business units, departments, and program topics and titles).

The video portal allows employees to access content at their desktops or view it on personal devices at times convenient to their work schedule. It provides a personal experience compared to when viewed on corporate media channels that display content on large screens in meeting rooms and common areas. Also, it allows employees to contribute and share employee-generated video content. It is the internal equivalent of the general-purpose portal on the public Web.

A large power company, with numerous independent regional companies, makes available over 800 videos through its corporate video portal. The videos include a wide range of topics addressing issues, events and activities about and relevant to all business units and departments. In addition, the portal hosts training videos and an increasing amount of employee generated content.

Executive briefings from the company CEO are some of the most viewed videos. The briefings are recorded by the CEO on his cell phone and are generally informal, depending on the topic. Viewing data and feedback indicates employees like the briefings because they are frequent, timely, brief and on topics of interest.

BEST PRACTICES

The following best practice guidelines can be helpful in the selection, implementation and management of an enterprise video network to improve or expand internal corporate communications.

Enterprise Video Strategy

Best practices begin with establishing the Enterprise Video Strategy, which identifies the targeted viewers (employees); the viewing locations, environments, and display screens;
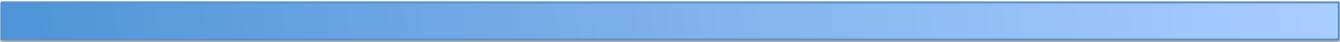
determines the content sources and types; and assesses the existing system capabilities for content creation, distribution, and management. The next step is the development of a Content Strategy, which identifies the sources, types and amount of content required and the resources necessary to create and manage content.

The next step is to establish the Technology Roadmap, which includes a high-level configuration of the video systems and capabilities to create, deliver, display and manage content.

Following are key best practice requirements to address when developing the Enterprise Video Strategy:

- Identify all target audiences
- Determine when and where you need to reach them, such as:
  - Conference, meeting, and break rooms
  - Offices and work spaces
  - Lobbies and near elevators
- Identify content sources, including executives and department heads
- Identify the content types and frequency
- Understand the value and use of live and on-demand content
- Identify the capabilities of the existing video systems and network
- Develop the content strategy
- Identify staff resource(s) who are experienced and skilled to manage the content and systems

There are three key recommendations: First, think marketing when developing the strategy. Because, you are essentially doing everything the marketing group does to advertise, market and promote products and services to external customers. Second, establish a governance committee to develop enterprise video guidelines; conduct a marketing and training program to ensure all key stakeholders understand how to leverage the system; monitor usage; and track results. Third, make sure that all key stakeholders, from content contributors to functional support groups, are included and on the same page about the goals and expectations.

Content strategy

Develop a content strategy that identifies employee needs and helps define the required functionality and capabilities of the enterprise video platform - prior to the selection of the system. Keep in mind throughout the process that Content is King. Best practice companies:

- Make content:
  - Relevant, fresh and timely
  - Visually appealing and engaging
  - Readily available and easily accessible
- Encourage the use of the video across the organizational chart, including:
  - Business units and departments

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- Employee generated content (EGC)
- Leverage interactive capabilities
- Are prepared to Feed the Beast - With newly created and curated content

It is critical to have buy-in and support from the departments responsible for providing content and the resources to create and manage the content

Technology Roadmap

Once the Enterprise Video and Content Strategies have been completed, best practice organizations should have a clear understanding of their existing systems, infrastructure, functional capabilities and workflow. The expectation is that the organization knows what it has and what it needs to do. The challenge is to then look to the marketplace to find the right solutions and vendor(s) to meet their specific needs by complementing the existing capabilities with additional and enhanced functionality. Key functional, operational and technology considerations include:

- User-friendly video creation, ingest, publishing, storage, and management capabilities
- Live channels and on-demand capabilities
- Interactive capabilities
- Leveraging the entire video ecosystem including distribution and tracking capabilities
- Ability to support all viable media formats
- Media players, where appropriate, to manage content locally
- Display screens appropriately located and presented (housings/stands)
- Leveraging personal devices to view (and create) content
- Centralized control (think IoT) of devices throughout the network
- Integration with other organizational initiatives
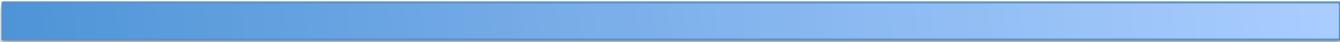- Automated systems and workflows

Don't let technology drive the selection of video solutions. Acquire and implement the solution(s) best suited to meet your requirements, as identified through the enterprise video strategy process and supports the content strategy.

Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

Leverage vendor expertise, resources and contract vehicles to manage and maintain the system. This may include managed services, for the development and management of content as well as the operation of the system.

Summary

The implementation of an enterprise video network for internal communications can be a challenging experience due to the vast amount of new and innovative technology and apps that continue to change the landscape. However, a number of factors make the process manageable:

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- Video is embraced as a valuable, if not mission critical, tool across the organizational chart for internal and external communications.
- There is a foundation of successes to build on and benchmark against.
- The leveraging of marketing (customer directed) approaches and practices provides an established path to success.
- Vendors have experience integrating video solutions into corporate infrastructure.
- Technology is available to do almost anything for any type of organizational structure.
- Technology and systems are affordable.
- Business justifications are easier, based on all of the above.

Keep in mind, the enterprise video network is likely to cost a company less than what it spends on employee coffee, but has the ability to have a significant impact on business results.

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Enliten tracks industry sources to find trends and innovations relevant to the use of video and dynamic media in the enterprise space. Our experience is gained through analysis, establishing desired future states, developing cost models and business justifications and assisting with the selection of solutions and vendors to meet each customer's specific needs.

Enliten's role and value is to provide information and insight about the *what* (technology and solutions) and perspective and guidance about *how* and *why* which technology will best fit with your business objectives and content strategy.

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Randy is a Digital Media/Business Communications expert and strategist. He is the author of *Digital Touch Points – How to Gain a Competitive Advantage Using Video and Dynamic Media* and other industry publications and white papers.
Learn more about Randy.