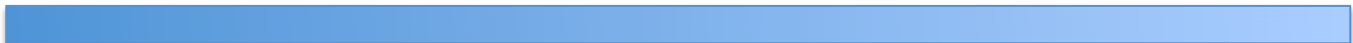




# **The Increasing Role and Value of Your Trusted Video Advisor**

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# The Increasing Role and Value of Your Trusted Video Advisor

## ***What's a trusted advisor?*** **And, why do you need one for enterprise video?**

Trusted advisors have been around for centuries, providing guidance and support to religious, political and business leaders. Today, they play a critical role in the enterprise space by helping executives make timely, informed and effective decisions that impact business results.

If you were to Google *trusted advisor*, you would find an endless amount of definitions, best practice guidelines, articles and books on the topic. Although, trusted advisors are usually associated with sales, marketing and financial aspects of business, they are playing a significant and increasing role for visual/video-based communications. Why and why now? Simply stated, video is everywhere and enterprise executives are faced with numerous challenges, including but not limited to:

- The overwhelming demand from customers and employees for video content.
- The increasing number of employees that want to create and contribute content.
- Leveraging content across departments and silos throughout the organization.
- Building a video ecosystem to handle the increasing volume of content and file sizes.
- Selecting and managing the plethora of new and changing technology.
- Protecting the corporate brand.

More important is the increasing role video has in driving business results and the impact it can have on the bottom line.

Fortunately, best practices and general guidelines that work for traditional trusted advisors also apply to video in the enterprise, where industry consultants, product and service providers and system integrators fulfill this role. And, although a trusted advisor can be anyone, the focus here is on *trusted video industry vendors*. What are key qualities for a trusted advisor?

- Putting the client's interests first.
- Understanding the importance of clients' needs.
- Believes the goal is to develop a long-term relationship with clients versus short-term gains.
- Ability to think strategically.

Other qualities require a trusted advisor to be knowledgeable about and understand:

- Your organization's culture: video uses and needs, individual and departmental interests and requirements, procurement guidelines.
- Industry providers.
- Industry trends and technology capabilities.

Also, they should have a culture complementary to your organization and offer products and services that meet a representative amount of your visual-based communications and workplace learning requirements. In essence, they should perform as an extension of you, your operation and organization. Their involvement helps you solve business challenges and, quite frankly, lets you sleep at night.

There is no requirement that a trusted advisor be an existing vendor or that you have only one. Good guidance and support can come from anywhere and numerous sources.

What are some of the best practices for embracing and leveraging an industry vendor as a trusted advisor?

- Include them as part of the planning team that develops the organization's:
  - Media business strategy
  - Content strategy
  - Technology roadmap
- Encourage and facilitate engagement between the trusted vendor and key stakeholders in the organization, including executives and other heavy users of video (e.g.: marketing, sales, training, human resources, etc.), and technical support groups such as IT, facilities and systems.
- Amend and/or expand your contract to include consultative services.
- Develop a structure and roadmap for the term of the contract.
  - Include Key Performance Indicators and other significant/known criteria that can be factored into expectations and the SLA.
  - Schedule regular meetings and product assessments.

What are the key benefits by engaging a trusted advisor? You may get:

- Expanded knowledge of industry trends and new technology.
- Insights into what other companies are implementing, why and with what degree of success.
- Assistance with strategic planning and solution cost justifications.
- Outside perspectives that can help position video solutions and services as a valuable resource across the enterprise.
- Time and resources saved to focus on core business issues.

The insight, guidance and support help you perform more effectively as a key contributor to achieving the organization's strategic business objectives.

What is the incentive for an industry provider to be a trusted advisor? They can:

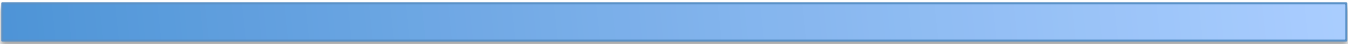
- Collaborate on the development, and/or acquisition of new and enhanced functionality and capabilities for its products and services.
- Establish strategic partnerships with other vendors that provide products and services complementary to their offerings and relevant to your needs.
- Leverage findings and lessons learned across other clients and apply them to the development of next generation solutions and business practices.
- Solidify their relationship and ensure a long-term business engagement.

### **Compelling User Cases:**

A major university needed a centrally managed digital signage solution to replace and expand its current capabilities. It found a wide selection of DS screens was installed throughout the campus featuring a diverse range of programming. There was no continuity across departments or facilities in technology, content or vendors. Many of the screens were dark. Much of the content was outdated or poorly displayed. Some of the screens were located in areas not conducive to the content.

The university researched industry vendors, including the various providers of the existing DS solutions. It selected one of the existing vendors to provide, implement and manage a centralized DS solution. The university collaborated with the vendor to establish a four-year implementation plan that leveraged existing hardware and network infrastructure. The plan included an immediate deployment of screens in new locations as well as enhanced or replacement screens at some of the existing sites. The vendor's software solution was implemented across all screens to provide a consistent look throughout the campus and enhanced the university's brand. Content sources and types were carefully selected to meet the institutional needs as well as departmental or user interests. Where appropriate, touch screens were installed to address wayfinding needs and provide detailed information at facilities such as athletics, the library, dormitories and the student center.

The digital signage vendor worked with the IT and facilities organizations to integrate the DS solution across the campus-wide-distribution network. The expectation is that some portions of the campus would not be reached until the latter years of the contract, as outlined in the technology roadmap. The outside integration services are provided through an existing contract managed by the systems group. The digital signage vendor provides the hardware and software as well as managed services to maintain the display equipment. Also, the vendor is contracted to provide the staff resources to manage the content through the initial term of the agreement, including development of templates, the creation of content, administration of what's displayed on the screens for both institutional and departmental use, managing third party sources, and training authorized contributors on the system. It is anticipated that the university will assume these roles over time, as staff become proficient on the system and learn how to manage and leverage the various sources and diverse viewing interests. The end result is that the university has a consistent look across the campus, with relevant and timely content to



meet the viewing interests as per screen locations. In addition, it was achieved through minimal contract vehicles making the acquisition process easier and ongoing support of the system manageable.

A government agency needed to expand and enhance its interactive distance-learning network. It turned to a trusted industry consultant that has provided guidance and services for more than a decade. The trusted advisor assisted in the development of the funding request. Then, once approved, the advisor recommended an industry vendor to provide a suite of services including project management, the development of course content for the training of instructors, and technical support services for the installation of the interactive broadcast centers. The vendor worked in collaboration with the agency's network provider to implement the systems globally. The result is that the implementation was completed under budget, which allowed the agency to include system enhancements surpassing expectations.

A leading retail company needed an upgrade of its enterprise-wide distance learning and communications network. It reached out to the industry specialist that supported previous network implementations. The vendor assisted with the analysis of the company's media business requirements, framework for the technology roadmap and development of the business justification. The company selected an industry provider best suited to meet its current needs and that shared a common vision of the future enterprise video landscape. The system implementation refreshed the existing network and incorporated the latest interactive technology with a blend of social media tools. The end solution emphasized a shift that supports the company's video-centric approach to training and communications by moving away from a learning content management system (LCMS) and building the ecosystem around a media asset management system.

In a previous article (*For Video Solutions That Work, Look to Video Solution Providers*), we described why and how video solution providers are best suited to help organizations address video related challenges and opportunities. This retail company may be at the forefront of the industry in the way it worked with video solution providers to future-proof its enterprise-wide video ecosystem to meet its video-centric needs.

In summary, identify the strong, enduring relationships you have with industry vendors. Leverage them for guidance and support to help implement and manage an effective, successful enterprise video ecosystem for your communications and workplace learning. It may be a key step to your earning a seat at the table by impacting business results.



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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**Learn more about [Randy](#).**