



BUYER'S GUIDE TO

Online Meeting Solutions

Four key criteria for evaluating video, audio and web conferencing platforms

BlueJeans
by Verizon

Purchasing an Online Meetings Platform

If you're interested in bringing online meetings and high value collaboration to your workforce, this guide is for you. To assist you in the buying process, we've outlined critical features, use cases and benefits to consider across four key evaluation criteria.



Businesses of all kinds are adopting a new class of unified meetings platform, which incorporate the latest video, audio, and web conferencing capabilities, and include click-to-join connectivity from any device with nothing to download. These platforms also offer reliable collaboration tools and live service intelligence to bring more effective communication between employees, while helping businesses be agile, increase efficiency, and achieve higher productivity—all at a faster pace.

The Modern Workforce Landscape

There's a digital transformation happening across today's mobile workforce. The closed technology ecosystem of phones, emails, chat, and shared sites is being replaced by a growing number of open

meeting platforms that foster easier communication and widespread collaboration. This transformation has shifted the idea of work from a place people go to something they can do when they want, how they want, and from where they want. But, how are companies accommodating this highly mobile, "always on" workforce?

With somewhere between 36 and 56 million meetings* happening every day in the US alone, online meetings are the most efficient path to effective, widespread work collaboration. The next wave of digital transformation is about supporting easy, intelligent connectivity while maximizing existing resources, time, and empowering people, no matter where they are located, or how they prefer to work.

**Lucid Meetings Blog*

1 CRITERIA

Drive Smarter Productivity Across Your Organization

Click-to-join, cloud-based meeting platforms are changing the way people communicate and work. They are the new standard in enterprise communication, collaboration, and content sharing. In fact, when working remotely, 87% of desktop video conferencing users feel more connected to their teams and colleagues. Further, connected employees work efficiently and drive increased productivity thanks to smarter, time-saving advancements in the live- and post-meeting experience.

Online meetings mean instant connectivity for every participant with no passcodes or dial-in numbers to remember, so joining is simple and quick. Cloud-based meeting platforms are readily available, always up to date, and able to integrate with other types of software platforms, hardware, and workflow tools. Whether your organization is a multi-national enterprise or a small, regionally-based business, today's online meetings offer the security, manageability, and scalability required for professional, highly efficient productivity.

Meeting Types and Use Cases

Seamless support for live, interactive meetings of any size or type across multiple devices, room systems, and endpoints is one of the biggest advantages of a modern meeting platform. From one-to-one to larger, interactive meetings—like global all-hands, training sessions, and webinars—today's platforms provide highly adaptable, dependable collaboration for any type of meeting.

The influx of online meetings technology encourages collaboration and communication both within and between businesses, across any device, and through existing conference or huddle rooms. Imagine how productive your sales team could be by using a video call to demonstrate your product to a client, or how much faster HR could hire top candidates by incorporating video interviews.

SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

Simple, one-touch experience

Users demand simplicity and speed from their communication tools. Meeting solutions should deliver a click-to-join experience with no complicated dial-in sequences or downloads required. This parallels the experience people are accustomed to with consumer products like FaceTime.

High quality video and audio

Online meetings are most productive when the technology fades into the background. HD video and screen sharing with high framerate and no lag ensures people and content are the focus of the meeting. HD audio with background noise suppression technology ensures everyone is heard, with no distractions, when joining from airports, coffee shops, or other noisy environments.

**GigaOm Research*

Scalable consistency across devices, locations, and IT environments

Users need to access meetings consistently via different devices, from anywhere. Integrating with mobile devices and existing hardware endpoints, including Cisco, Dolby, Polycom, and LifeSize is critical. As demand increases for additional users, meetings platforms must scale seamlessly across any IT architecture, providing easy deployment, onboarding, and integration.

Intelligent meeting summaries

Allow users to time stamp and auto-transcribe only the most important parts of the conversation to capture and prioritize next steps. Throughout the meeting, users can assign action items for tagged participants while documenting all notifications in an interactive meeting repository. If participants missed a meeting or would like to revisit the content, consider a technology that automatically summarizes all highlighted discussion points in a condensed timeline for accelerated recap.

BOTTOM LINE IMPACT

Improve organizational productivity

Users can join meetings directly from email invitations, calendar appointments, URL links, and collaboration tools from Microsoft, Google, Slack, and Atlassian. Any device or room system can support high value video, audio, and web conferencing collaboration including screen sharing, meeting recording, artificial

intelligence (AI) assistance, annotations and file sharing, and whiteboarding. Companies can host, manage, and livestream interactive web, audio, and video events for large audiences around the world.

Increase user engagement and productivity

Enable users to collaborate more efficiently with breakout rooms, where small meetings can occur to facilitate discussion. Users can additionally utilize virtual hand-raising and emoji icons to remain engaged in meetings. For hosts, weatherperson mode allows for a level of interaction that simulates the real world, with the individual pointing directly to the content being shared.

Reduce user frustration and IT helpdesk requests

Users can click-to-join a meeting from any browser—with no need to download apps, plugins or register with a meeting ID. Helpdesk personnel can remotely moderate video calls on a centralized dashboard—without actually going anywhere—while also reducing the number of trouble tickets generated by legacy video conferencing systems.

Scalable solution for growing businesses

Cloud-based meetings easily scale to accommodate additional users while keeping proprietary data safe on a trusted platform. This type of architecture drives naturally collaborative cultures and supports a more mobile, flexible workforce—now and into the future.

2 CRITERIA

Interoperability and Integrations Across Devices and Workplace Applications

Interoperability—making the barriers between different video conferencing software systems, platforms, and hardware non-existent—is a must for any meetings solution. Interoperability breathes new life into existing technology investments, and lets users communicate with their clients, colleagues, and partners regardless of which endpoint they use. This makes connecting via multi-vendor software and hardware much easier.

Whether it's via a mobile device or conference room system, an interoperable meetings platform allows users to join meetings the way they prefer. Conference room users in particular, have long been plagued by the video tax: the additional time associated with navigating complicated remotes and dial-in procedures to simply start a meeting. A consistent, click-to-join experience makes incorporating existing technology investments, like on premise hardware, simple and seamless. Interoperable meetings must also be accessible through major web browsers like Safari, Firefox, and Google Chrome via WebRTC—so both internal and external connections can be made quickly and conveniently, without installing plugins or opening a new application.

Integrating video, audio, and web conferencing within a broader collaboration ecosystem lets users initiate video connections from everyday workflows. This high value collaboration opens the door for users to join meetings directly from popular calendar applications like Google Calendar and Microsoft Outlook, or leading collaboration toolsets like Slack or Workplace by Facebook. Supporting workflow consistency enhances user productivity and delivers instant, seamless collaboration. As artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, like Voicera, provide speech recognition and a virtual meeting assistant, leading platforms are integrating this unique feature to help accomplish even more in every meeting.

SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

Adapt to heterogeneous IT environments

Today's complex IT environments require a solution that works with a wide range of SIP/H.323 endpoints and collaboration services so it's easily accessible and convenient for users. This flexibility also protects as well as optimizes existing systems and infrastructure investments from vendors like Cisco or Polycom.

Measurable performance

IT teams need to measure and monitor meetings, track usage trends, and see distribution numbers among users and endpoints. This “must have” data reveals utilization numbers, helps IT teams plan for the future, and determine ROI.

Dependable service and customer support

High quality service levels and the speed of support is critical for sustaining operations and contributing to bottom line results.

BOTTOM LINE IMPACT

Easy to deploy and adopt

Today's meetings are built on a cloud-based architecture, which makes for reliable, secure, one-touch connectivity via mobile devices and multi-vendor room systems. Users can join right from popular collaboration tools like Slack, Workplace by Facebook, and Microsoft Teams.

Maximize existing IT investments

When it comes to optimizing legacy software, hardware, room systems, and services, having a highly flexible, cloud-based meetings platform transforms any multi-vendor environment into a highly functioning, unified communications asset.

Reduce burden on IT personnel

A cloud-based solution, featuring a centralized management dashboard, lets IT personnel more easily troubleshoot, monitor in progress meetings, measure company-wide usage, and receive proactive alerts. This type of management tool is critical for calculating ROI and other savings associated with unified meeting efficiencies.





Consolidate Existing Communications Tools and Services

Many companies have separate contracts with major vendors for their video, audio, and web conferencing services. To bridge the gap between these vendors, online meetings software must be designed for flexibility, thereby working within diverse, multi-layered IT infrastructures and adapting to various meeting types. Whether your environment includes Microsoft, Cisco, LifeSize, Dolby, or Polycom, allowing attendees to connect, regardless of platform, encourages flexible collaboration and repeat usage. By leveraging a cloud infrastructure, devices in multi-party, video conference rooms can easily connect with no additional MCU hardware required.

A consolidated meetings platform must not only support high quality video, audio, and web conferencing, but screen sharing, meeting recording, whiteboarding and annotation, and instant messaging. Whether the meeting is a customary one-on-one, a presentation or brainstorming session, combining all-in-one online meetings with popular collaboration tools delivers a comprehensive, user experience that's unparalleled.

Maximizing meeting performance only happens when there's a live service intelligence, management, and analytics dashboard included. This way, IT can identify which departments are communicating most effectively, how often, and which are failing to gain traction. A thorough analytics component also provides real-time, historical meeting activity and performance metrics, so IT personnel can accurately measure usage, provide real-time support, and calculate ROI.

SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

Flexibility and scale across meeting types

Meetings must work across multiple software platforms, conference room systems, and services. From ad hoc meetings to conference room sessions to global all-hands and town hall events, everyone should have easy access to consistent video, audio, and web conferencing that supports a variety of use cases.

Accessible from existing workflows

From Slack, Microsoft Teams, Facebook Workplace and more, employees have their favorite collaboration tools. In most circumstances, they prefer to keep these established workflow practices while having one-touch access to immersive, video, audio, and web conferencing.

Secure, trusted platform

Meetings should run on reliable, scalable, and highly secure cloud architecture with Firewall/NAT traversal and SOC 2 verification, encryption, SSO and IP VPN deployment options. It should meet detailed security compliance standards, including transmission security and fully authenticated hosts.

Performance monitoring and management

Live service intelligence combined with centralized management helps maximize your meetings platform investment. Such detailed and comprehensive analysis lets management and IT teams successfully visualize, measure, and manage usage.

BOTTOM LINE IMPACT

Reduce costs and complexity

Cloud-based meetings greatly reduce ongoing operational costs, including equipment maintenance,

while simplifying deployment across complex, multi-vendor IT environments.

Fast-track workforce productivity

A unified platform eliminates “toolset” overload in which employees are confused by which tool to use for which type of meeting. Click-to-join meetings across a consolidated platform unite employees, partners, and clients, supporting a faster, more dynamic workforce, and driving business growth.

Centralized “always on” meetings platform

Every employee, partner, and client has one-touch access—from any laptop, device or room system—to a single, cloud-based platform where they can participate in a high quality, collaborative experience that features the latest video, audio, and web conferencing capabilities.



4

CRITERIA

Reduce operational and travel costs

A fully integrated cloud platform, supporting video, audio, and web conferencing, simplifies legacy tech stacks while eliminating redundant software and services. Room system interoperability puts existing A/V equipment to use and provides simpler options for more accessible room hardware. This approach supports business growth by moving away from buying and/or maintaining hardware to a software as a service (SaaS) model that incorporates existing toolsets and workflows. An ongoing subscription service ends up being much cheaper than buying, maintaining, and updating an on-premise infrastructure.

Another important element of the meetings service is vendor support. Before, during, and after deployment, vendors should pull out all the stops to ensure that their solution is on track for long-term success. Partnering with your business on the change management process, vendors should help ensure high adoption rates, while also providing sufficient support coverage, and options for customizable implementations.

With online meetings, the cost of employee airfare, lodging, and meals will decline. Travel costs become even more expensive when factoring in unexpected elements such as missed connections, cancelled flights, or lost luggage. Each year, business travel mishaps amount to out-of-pocket expenses of \$1,475 per employee, plus an average of 2.3 work days lost[†]. In 2013, flights produced 705 million tons of CO₂, accounting for 12% of CO₂ emissions from all transport sources[‡]. Rather than sending employees to meet with clients, a virtual meeting link allows them to collaborate just as efficiently from anywhere. With less travel, employees also have additional time to dedicate to projects and increase productivity.

[†]Global Business Travel Magazine [‡]Air Transport Action Group

SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

Maximize workforce efficiencies

Every employee should have access to high quality video, audio, and web collaboration that consistently results in successful business outcomes.

Simple for anyone to use and highly reliable

The meetings platform must be easy to access and feature an intuitive interface—with click-to-join simplicity and nothing to download—while providing a consistently reliable, and immersive communication experience for all parties.

Align with budget requirements

Reduce budget spent on redundant collaboration software, legacy web conferencing services, and other budget draining technologies, by consolidating your existing IT stack and integrating existing communication toolsets on one meetings platform.

Sufficient support services available

For any globally deployed, software platform, IT teams require high levels of easily accessible, 24/7 support and reliable, expert assistance.

BOTTOM LINE IMPACT

Reduce travel related expenses and IT costs

Meetings technology has evolved to such an extent that it offers a viable, reliable, and high-quality travel alternative, saving thousands in annual travel, and travel related costs. Meetings on a cloud-based architecture also lessen OpEx hardware costs.

High value collaboration on one platform

Today's meeting platforms don't just deliver high-quality video and sound, but support an array of collaboration features such as screen sharing, meeting recording, AI meeting assistants, and whiteboarding to provide a truly immersive meeting experience for every participant.

Increase employee efficiencies

Enhance business conversations and make use of tools already within reach of most business professionals—like laptops or smart devices—successfully transforming traditionally siloed structures, while fostering employee unity and supporting greater efficiencies, regardless of location.

Reduce IT burden and measure ROI

A centrally managed, online meetings platform lets IT leaders access and share measurable usage statistics. While monitoring meetings from afar, they can track historic usage trends, and see usage distribution among users and endpoints.

Conclusion

Every organization has different meeting requirements and budgets. Simply selecting the “market leader” isn't always the best option for you and your specific needs. Include all stakeholders, manage expectations, and understand what types of problems you need to solve. Ensure that the meetings platform you purchase drives high value productivity, delivers leading, cross platform interoperability, offers live- and post-meeting intelligence, integrates with popular collaboration tools, consolidates your existing technology stack, and reduces both operational and travel costs. Be sure it's the right one—for you and your users.

10 Point Buying Checklist

1. Know what problem(s) you need your new meetings software to solve.

- Are employees collaborating efficiently?
- Do your teams need an intelligent solution to increase productivity?
- Are employees having difficulty operating your existing solution? Is it too complex?
- Are your conference rooms underutilized?
- Are your existing meeting services or collaboration tools too fragmented?
- Do you need to save on travel costs?
- Do you want to better connect remote offices?
- What types of meetings do you need to support?

2. Ensure these needs are aligned with your business goals and budget.

- What collaboration issues are facing your industry?
- How do modern meetings fit within your organization?
- What meeting benefits will make the biggest difference for your organization?

3. Determine and prioritize IT infrastructure as well as room system requirements.

- Do you need to integrate other applications, such as Google Calendar or Slack, to share with users?
- Are all your room systems operating on the same service?
- Do you want to get more from your existing software or A/V equipment?

4. Identify platform management capabilities, usage analysis, and ROI reporting.

- How important is it to track usage and provide remote support?
- What metrics are important to you?
- Which meeting metrics do you currently measure?
- Are there metrics you want to measure, but can't?

5. Identify existing processes that will be affected by the new software.

- Will existing employee collaboration practices need to be revamped?
- How will IT personnel be affected?
- How will this new platform affect sales team collaboration?
- How will company all-hands meetings or training sessions be affected?

6. Consider how these processes can be improved.

- Does your meetings provider assist with change management and offer ongoing platform support?
- How can you work with the provider to easily roll out a new solution to your end users?

7. Compare meetings solutions with your requirements and remove those that do not match.

- Does your proposed meetings provider have experience meeting your unique requirements?

8. Research similar business use cases for proof points.

- How are similar companies in your industry using meeting solutions?
- What types of meetings does your organization require?
- What's their track record with companies in your industry?

9. View comprehensive product demonstrations and participate in free trials.

- Have you evaluated all aspects of the solution thoroughly?
- Have your questions or concerns been addressed to your satisfaction?

10. Make final purchase decision.

Key Questions to Consider

Is it easy to use?

Make sure that your new meetings software is easy to join and intuitive for all users—both inside and outside your organization. This is where WebRTC makes a substantial difference.

Is it within your budget?

This depends on how you meet and the size of your organization, but cloud-based meetings are typically the most cost effective since they require only a laptop or mobile device, and an Internet connection.

Does it fit into your long-term plan?

Think about your goals and vision. Do you know what you want your workflow to look like in five years? Do you expect changes? Will your solution provider offer the flexibility for change? Choose a solution that you see growing with your organization.

Does it meet your security requirements?

Your meetings solution should be robust enough to keep out threats and include meeting locks in order to make sure no one drops in who shouldn't be there.

How well is the platform supported?

Real-time communications require real-time support. Today's meeting platforms should offer 24/7 access to support experts, so your meetings stay dependable and productive.

Can it consolidate your existing IT stack?

A modern meetings cloud solution should sync with your existing IT stack, helping to maximize related SaaS investments across a single, meetings platform.

Does it provide enterprise grade management tools?

Today's meeting platforms should provide centralized management capabilities for remote user support, measuring usage, and calculating ROI.

Is it compatible with your existing hardware?

An interoperable, cloud-based platform makes this easy. The right meetings solution provides a consistent, click to join experience across multi-vendor hardware and room systems.

Can it integrate smoothly into your work environment?

Your new solution should match the way your organization works. Your teams want to use the new service to collaborate, save time, and make their lives easier. It should not complicate things and create more problems.

Purchasing Criteria Worksheet

As you look for new meeting solutions, complete the following worksheet to track the performance of vendors against the most critical evaluation criteria. Rank the importance of a given criteria in the WEIGHTING column. For example, if Room System Interoperability is most important to you, put a '1' next to it in the WEIGHTING column, then rank the vendors you are evaluating against that criteria.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	WEIGHTING	VENDOR 1	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 3
Simple, intuitive user experience				
One-click, fast to join meetings				
Two-way, HD video				
HD audio with background noise suppression				
Intelligent live- and post-meeting tools (highlights, social tagging, summarized recap)				
Collaboration features (screen sharing, white boarding, recording, etc.)				
Supports a variety of meeting types				
No download required with WebRTC				
Room system interoperability				
Supports mobile devices				
Integrations (calendars, messaging, etc.)				
Management, monitoring and analytics				
Deployment model (SaaS vs. on premise)				
Change management process				
Customer success program				
24/7 support and training resources				
Scalability				
Security				

Make Online Meetings Work for You

Modernizing your meetings strategy with a cloud-based video, audio, and web conferencing platform is something that should positively affect every employee, allowing them to connect and collaborate like never before, while contributing mightily to your bottom line.

Learn how BlueJeans can make modern meetings a reality for your business.

[Start your free 14-day trial](#)

About BlueJeans

The first cloud service to connect desktops, mobile devices, and room systems in one video meeting, BlueJeans makes meetings fast to join and simple to use, so people can work productively where and how they want. It is the meeting solution teams trust to do their best work.

BlueJeans Meetings

Collaborate effectively with video, audio, and web conferencing from anywhere. Instantly join, host, or manage meetings from a conference room, your desk, or a mobile device.

BlueJeans Rooms

Transform any room into an easy-to-use video conference space. Increase workforce collaboration with rooms that require little to no end-user training and provide effortless IT management.

BlueJeans Events

Host and livestream interactive events, town halls, and webinars for large audiences around the world. Engage up to 150,000 attendees with immersive video, Q&A, polling, and moderator controls.

Discover how BlueJeans modernizes meetings and makes your teams more productive.

www.bluejeans.com/trial