



7 Questions to Ask Before Choosing a Video Conferencing Solution

How to Avoid the “Gotchas”

Don't have the time or money to support the travel demands of your far-flung operations? Video conferencing has emerged as the on-demand solution for a fraction of any travel and expense budget.

But the explosion of video communications has created a multitude of video conferencing products — and it's increasingly difficult to navigate the maze of choices and end up with a solution that's powerful enough to meet your communications needs today while offering the flexibility to respond to the opportunities, challenges, and changes of tomorrow.

To assist you with the due diligence process, make sure you ask these 7 key questions to uncover any flaws or limitations of a given solution:

1. Does the vendor provide a “total” solution?
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2. Does the technology deliver true HD capabilities?
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3. What is the cost-per-port of high-definition?
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4. Is the technology designed to fit unobtrusively into any business setting?
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5. Does the technology integrate effectively with other brands?
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6. Does the technology easily integrate with Microsoft/Lotus?
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7. Is the technology easy for anyone to operate?
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The purpose of this document is to help you avoid the “gotchas” and ensure you make the right selection of a video conferencing solution. So let's explore each of these questions in more detail.

1. Does the vendor provide a "total" solution?

Imagine if a friend told you he purchased an automobile after thoroughly investigating the quality of its radio and carburetor. You'd be shocked that he'd made such an expensive purchase based on a couple of components, rather than look at how the car operated as a whole. However, that's precisely what many people do making a video conferencing purchase. They focus on the endpoints, rather than look at whether the infrastructure will allow the endpoints to perform at the quality they expect.

"They should deploy a total solution that lays down a foundational platform for management, control and performance," says the consulting firm Frost & Sullivan in their white paper titled *Video Conferencing Best Practices: Leveraging the Value of the Total Solution*. "That, in turn, will support whatever features and endpoints they, and their end users, need — today, and in the future."

A total solution begins with three key elements:

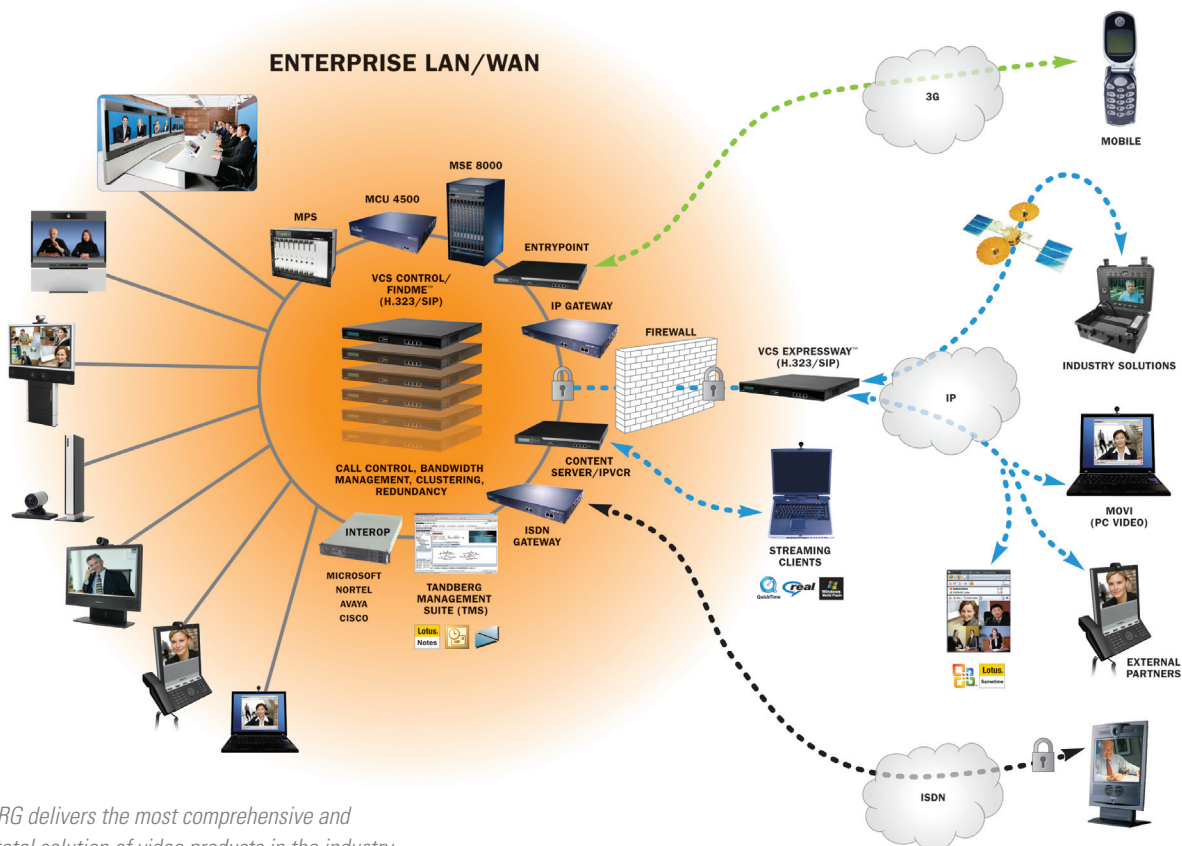
- A management solution that handles scheduling, monitoring, automatic software updates, and reporting.

- Network control for bandwidth management and authentication, as well as enabling access and supporting features, such as a unified dialing plan.
- Firewall Traversal to enable remote communication with remote employees, as well as customers, suppliers, and partners.

With that platform in place, you can add on Multipoint Control Units to connect multiple audio and video sites; gateways for seamless voice and video connectivity between IP and ISDN networks; recording and streaming to enable content creation, distribution, and compliance; and the best mix of endpoints.

A complete solution, properly designed, will provide utility-like technology that never fails, giving you future-proofing and maximizing the value of your technology investment through interoperability and lower cost of ownership.

TANDBERG® has emerged as the industry leader in both video conferencing infrastructure and endpoints because of its emphasis on the total solution and the ultimate end-user experience. TANDBERG infrastructure is designed to integrate with any existing infrastructure and support the full video feature set, making the video experience seamless. As a result, the technology is invisible to the end-user allowing for mass adoption, scalable roll-out, and no disruption as new technologies and services are added.



TANDBERG delivers the most comprehensive and reliable total solution of video products in the industry.

2. Does the technology deliver true HD capabilities?

Just as High Definition televisions (HDTV) are making their way into consumers' homes, business-to-business video conferencing is embracing HD for telemedicine, business conferences, and other applications that demand the crispest images and clearest sound. However, in video conferencing, not all HD is created equal.

Surprisingly, some video conferencing systems don't even satisfy their manufacturer's own definition of HD — a frame rate of 24 to 30 fps. Instead, these systems produce "High Definition" at only 17 fps, resulting in smaller and jittery images. Another drawback: some HD products can't even work with other products from the same manufacturer (not to mention other manufacturers), making the equipment less valuable as you want to use video conferencing in more locations with varied technology.

TANDBERG's Codian 4500 conference bridge — given the coveted VON Magazine 2008 Innovators Award — supports the highest video resolution, speed, frame rate, and codec of the latest HD endpoints. The result is a complete and optimal HD experience, whether you are connecting point-to-point or multipoint. With TANDBERG, you get the best possible HD with no expansion limitations.

Be careful of systems that promise HD, but can't even meet their own definition of HD performance.



The Codian MCU 4500 Series is the only conferencing bridge with the power to deliver a true high definition (HD), multimedia experience.

3. What is the cost-per-port of high-definition?

Some vendors can only accommodate the combination of High Definition (HD) and Standard Definition (SD) devices that typically take part in video conferencing calls by using a large number of ports. This raises the cost of the call and degrades performance, resulting in lower quality video and age-old g711 audio. This drawback comes from the technology's inability to both encode and then decode the HD transmission.

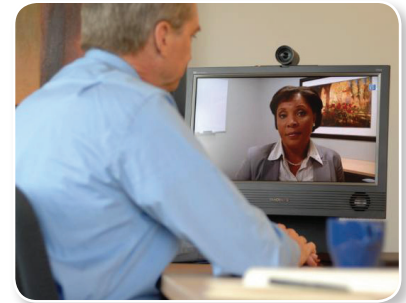
TANDBERG Codian has the ability to both encode and decode HD, so it provides a sharper image using only one port.

Companies that want to achieve natural communication in an expanding number of settings — your desk, your home, on your mobile phone, in a meeting room, on the manufacturing floor, in the classroom — will need High Definition and CD quality audio delivered transparently with centralized management and standards-based technology. That's what true HD is, and that's what TANDBERG gives you.

Some vendors provide HD through workarounds that dramatically raise cost per port.

4. Is the technology designed to fit unobtrusively into any business setting?

Video conferencing equipment should make communications across great distances feel as natural as talking to someone on the other side of your desk. A large part of that comes from the infrastructure that supports the technology. In addition, the endpoints themselves should be designed so you're hardly aware of them, making the equipment fit seamlessly into the way you do business — and into your office decor.



TANDBERG provides the full range of video communications systems — from desktop to room-size telepresence units, with aesthetics that are suitable for the more discerning executive. What's more, the equipment is engineered with an eye to how it fits into the work environment. Take the TANDBERG 1700 MXP, the only truly all-in-one HD executive desktop solution on the market today. The camera, LCD HD display, codec, along with all necessary audio components such as speakers and microphone, are in one compact unit that sits on the desktop. The unit also doubles as a PC monitor. The system is designed to use natural convection to cool down, and requires no fans, thereby eliminating the fan noise that would be uncomfortable on an executive desktop. Other companies, unable to emulate the product, have resorted to a split form factor, in which the codec sits on the table or on the floor.

There are tangible benefits of the TANDBERG approach, such as conserving your desk space and not crowding your elbows.

5. Does the technology integrate effectively with other brands?

Since video conferencing is inherently about making connections, you should determine how well the technology works with other brands. Even if you standardize on one solution, you'll likely deal with partners who use other types of equipment. Many video conferencing systems are proprietary, requiring costly workarounds that dramatically lower performance just to interface with other equipment.



The TANDBERG Management Suite (TMS) is the centerpiece of the TANDBERG high-level scalability management platform. It provides complete visibility and centralized control for on-site and remote video systems. TMS supports management, deployment, and scheduling of the entire video network, including Telepresence, from one single product. The TMS provides support not only for TANDBERG endpoints and infrastructure components, but also similar products from competitors that gives you confidence that the system can meet your changing future needs as you add new partners, suppliers, customers, and colleagues with different video conferencing equipment.

TANDBERG invented and was the first to market with Firewall Traversal H.460.18/19, which works seamlessly in any situation. And, TANDBERG developed its own camera technology, with full control of the entire image processing pipeline. With custom optics, you'll enjoy superior geometry and sharpness.

6. Does the technology easily integrate with Microsoft IBM Lotus?

Video conferencing often starts with small deployments that grow rapidly as the value of better communication and collaboration becomes evident. For many enterprises, the scalability of the solution hinges on deep integration with leading collaboration tools and unified communications platforms, namely Microsoft Office Communicator and IBM® Lotus® Sametime® Connect.

While some vendors claim compatibility between their video communications solutions and Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007, in reality, these vendors cannot support H.323 and Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) calls at the same time — that's a crucial oversight that can have huge implications in the performance of your system. H.323 is the established industry protocol for delivering core video functionality and SIP is the fast-growing protocol that allows video systems to leverage existing and next generation technologies.

Supporting both standards is important since SIP is the de facto standard for unified communications, allowing companies to realize out-of-the box integration and interoperability among various collaborative communications applications. As video moves toward the desktop, leveraging these technologies and delivering an increased level of personalization is critical to support the demands of your users. SIP supports new features such as mobility and presence and gives you access to familiar telephony-like tools such as call forwarding, transferring, and holding.

TANDBERG has developed strong ties with both the Lotus and Microsoft platforms. In fact, TANDBERG was honored by Frost & Sullivan, a leading industry consultant firm, as the 2008 Market Leadership Global Video Conferencing Systems

Award winner, partly because of TANDBERG's "interoperability with key vendors in the market to provide greater value for customers with multi-vendor environments." TANDBERG has licensed the Microsoft RT video and audio codecs, and will deliver the first high-definition webcam for Microsoft.

In addition, TANDBERG technology supports both H.323 and SIP, providing customers with a clear migration path to SIP, investment protection, more personalized video features at the desktop, and an easy step towards unified communication.



7. Is the technology easy for anyone to operate?

The value of video conferencing is directly related to how easy it is to use. Many video conferencing systems are difficult for non-technical employees to operate, requiring IT professionals to set up every call and guide participants through the complexity of using different equipment on the calls. Many desktop video conferencing systems are limited



in their ability to transfer calls or put people on hold, meaning workers have to give up everyday phone functionality just to use them.

With an emphasis on “natural communications,” TANDBERG makes video conferencing as simple as using the telephone. For instance, the TANDBERG “call completion” feature — the only one of its kind available in the industry — allows a desktop video conferencing unit to use all the phone functionality that workers have come to expect, like call forwarding.

TANDBERG scheduling software and ad hoc connection options let the users schedule and launch meetings with simple and familiar interfaces, including IBM Lotus Notes® and Microsoft Outlook® and Microsoft Office Communicator.

The firewall traversal technology embedded in TANDBERG, creates a secure path through the firewall barrier safely and seamlessly. In fact, it is now easy to deploy IP-video in a home office, simply by plugging an MXP endpoint into a DSL or cable modem. This means video conferencing can be implemented in home and small offices as easily as you would internally — you don’t need to add IT staff to scale.

Avoid the “Gotchas” with TANDBERG

When you explore a video conferencing solution, you’ll want to make sure you put TANDBERG at the top of your list. Why? Because the TANDBERG pledge — backed by a shelf-full of industry awards and satisfied Fortune 500 companies — is that you’ll be able to answer a resounding “yes!” to every question raised in this document. So as you explore solutions, make sure you demand the right technology.

Technology that is:

- Intuitive
- Natural
- Immersive
- Powerful
- Compatible
- Innovative
- Efficient

Don’t settle for something less when it comes to bringing intellectual capital together for critical communications and effective collaboration. Keep these questions handy if you are preparing an RFP, and make sure you avoid the “Gotchas”.

TANDBERG technology is inspired by our customers and their demand for continual innovation. To talk with a TANDBERG representative, or to see how TANDBERG can get your organization connected seamlessly, visit www.tandberg.com/learn. Click on the call-me button to immediately set up a demo or call us directly at 866-220-3679.