



Telepresence technology benefits

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The sustainability movement has challenged business leaders to focus on corporate social responsibility as part of their business models. A company's corporate carbon footprint and sustainable practices are on the minds of prospective customers and employees as they make their business decisions. Updating to energy efficient on-premise technology infrastructure or to cloud services can provide considerable savings on costs associated with power and cooling, while reducing corporate carbon footprints. In addition, advancements in unified communications and video conferencing technologies have led to the "telepresence revolution," which can greatly reduce the expense and emissions that result from business travel.

Telepresence - a higher level of video conferencing - is the convergence of voice, video, and data technologies in a finely tuned way that can bring people together from several geographic points into the same "room". The result is a rich collaborative atmosphere that can rival the sensory experience of a face-to-face meeting. Since the mid-2000s, firms have used telepresence systems to conquer geographic distances for both internal and customer meetings.

The environmental and financial numbers are promising. A recent study by the Carbon Disclosure Project found that enterprise-sized companies in the US and UK that implement four immersive telepresence rooms can cut CO2 emissions by 10 million metric tons while saving almost \$19 billion in travel expenses between 2010 and 2020. The savings begin immediately - firms that invest in telepresence technology can achieve a full return on investment in just 15 months.

The Carbon Disclosure Project study focuses on global companies that are capable of making technology investments that cost several hundred thousand dollars. But the good news is that telepresence technology is now scalable for the small-to-medium sized business (SMB). Manufacturers such as Cisco Systems offer telepresence solutions that suit the needs of home and commercial office users. High definition video and high fidelity audio systems can be properly sized for virtually any conference room. Desk phones with full-color video conferencing capabilities are now available for offices with limited space. And now, the video conferencing experience has truly gone mobile, thanks to devices like Cisco's Cius Android-based tablet.

With the development of technologies that are available at an entry-level platform, scalable, and mobile, companies of virtually any size can now participate in the cost savings and carbon-reducing benefits of telepresence technology.

For more information on the Carbon Disclosure Project study, go to www.cdproject.net.

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