

Professional Services: Needs Assessment

Service Overview

In order to design and implement a successful collaborative conferencing system (audio, web, video, telepresence, and unified communications), it is important to undertake a thorough analysis of an organization's needs. Input must be obtained from actual users.

A needs assessment provides value in four ways:

1. Provides data needed to **develop economic justification** for determining system cost and dollar benefits.
2. Gathers **input for the system design** phase by identifying functions, locations, and specific equipment needed.
3. Helps to assure that **once a system is installed it will be used** effectively for the right applications.
4. Contributes **input into long-range plans** for system expansion.

Needs Assessment Packages	
25 interviews/50 online questionnaires	\$35,750
50 interviews/75 online questionnaires	\$52,750
75 interviews/100 online questionnaires	\$79,500
Custom* Price dependent on number of interviews conducted & number of questionnaires analyzed	Quoted

Too often organizations assume that one type of collaborative conferencing will meet all their needs. In reality, different forms of collaborative conferencing meet different needs. It would be wasteful to install a videoconferencing system if an assessment indicated that all people needed is good quality audio with graphics support. Similarly, installation of a graphics system may not meet the needs of all the intended users -- especially those needing to see facial expressions of others. Any needs assessment should look at all forms of collaborative conferencing -- audio, data/web, and video -- real-time and delayed.

The objectives of the needs assessment are to:

1. Provide an **assessment of current and potential users** of videoconferencing and collaborative communications technologies (audio, web, video, telepresence and unified communications) to determine their perceptions and needs;
2. Provide an **evaluation of the current videoconferencing infrastructure**;
3. Provide an **analysis on the technology** available to meet the identified needs.

To obtain relevant information on which the organization can base changes to and practices for videoconferencing and collaborative communications systems, it is important to use a standardized questionnaire. The purpose of a questionnaire is to determine how people are meeting, with whom they meet and if conferencing and collaborative communications can enhance those meetings.

Data is gathered face-to-face, over the phone, and through online surveys. A random sample of individuals who are current or potential users of these technologies should be interviewed or complete the online survey. Throughout the assessment process it is important to get detailed information about specific meeting applications that exist in the targeted groups. A properly designed and implemented system will be offering users a tool that is intended to perform specific tasks to achieve specific results.