TIEVA
FULCRUM IT PARTNERS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
MODERN
MEETING ROOM

A TIEVA eGuide

CREATING THE
MODERN
MEETING ROOM

As distributed workforces grow and hybrid office arrangements evolve, physical meeting spaces within the workplace must keep pace with technological advancements and shifting patterns in how they're used. To ensure that these valuable spaces remain effective, your organisation must consider how to maximise their use and ensure participants feel included and fully engaged - no matter where they are.

This essential guide by TIEVA sets you up for success, by showing you how to successfully integrate the latest audio-visual and collaboration technologies in your meeting spaces to bridge the gap between remote and in-office workers.

CONTENTS

WHAT MAKES A
MODERN MEETING ROOM?

Today's workforce is now certainly more agile than ever before – distributed across multiple locations. However, no matter how widely spread your employees are, they still need to remain connected, in order to collaborate effectively. With this global shift in the way we work, the role of the meeting room has gained importance as a means of ensuring that teams stay in touch and work efficiently together. It is therefore essential that meeting room equipment is chosen well to ensure that today's modern workforce can continue to drive businesses forward.

HISTORY

Historically, meetings have far too often been frustrating events associated with time misspent. We've all had our time wasted by irritating issues such as not having the right cable to connect screen share, applications that need an update just as your meeting is starting, or the technology being too fiddly to use. Indeed, until now, collaboration and group-led activities have often been limited by the set-up of the meeting room, or the resources available to participants, leading to a less than productive session.

And now, with the 'new normal' of increased homeworking, what about communicating and collaborating with those located remotely? Does your meeting room meet the challenges of this new way of working? With today's workforce situated anywhere and everywhere, it's critical that communication is seamless, secure and simple.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW!

At the best of times, improperly kitted-out meeting rooms can stifle potential, but now it is more important than ever that you have the right technology to cope with the specific demands of a more dispersed workforce. Outdated equipment can cause delays, be difficult to use, be less cost-effective and prevent collaboration and teamwork-based meetings from being as productive and effective as they could be.

There are many tell-tale signs that your meeting rooms are long overdue an overhaul, especially if you suffer from any of the following issues:

> Limitations when collaborating with remote recipients – this can seriously damage your productivity in today's working world.

> Attendees forced to travel long distances for meetings – a costly event and perhaps not the best use of someones time.

> Low staff uptake of meeting room tools – usually caused by outdated equipment, which is difficult to operate, or a lack of training.

> Delayed starts to meetings as technology is set up – with the latest equipment, this will become a thing of the past.

> Difficulty or delays when swapping presenter – a frustrating issue which can seriously affect attendee engagement.

> Connection problems, including drops on calls – a costly time-waster, which can be easily resolved with the right equipment.

> Low-quality audio, including volume issues, reverb and background noise – this can give a poor impression and can be easily fixed with the latest equipment.

> Different technology in different rooms, making usage more complicated than necessary.

> Separate systems for voice, video and data collaboration – an unnecessary complication which can be remedied with an upgrade.

> Cables... cables everywhere!

Don't settle for mediocrity

When implemented correctly, the right technology can completely transform an ageing meeting space into a modern collaboration hub where innovation, great conversations and successful meetings take place easily. You'll also achieve real return on investment (ROI) on your IT purchases, by enabling participants to join a meeting from any location, eliminating the need and expense of unnecessary travel while improving efficiency and productivity.

WHY IS THE
MODERN MEETING ROOM
SO IMPORTANT?

Creating springboards for collaboration

When designing your new meeting rooms, it is vital that you consider your users. Refreshing the technology available can create brand new opportunities for those who are already actively using your meeting rooms. In addition, you can remove any IT-based frustrations that may be preventing potential users from seeing the value of meeting room collaboration. So, the resulting improved meeting room uptake could mean that you will be set to see an even greater return on your investment.

Three critical questions that guarantee success

With the usability of your new spaces in mind, there are three core questions to ask yourself when considering which technology you need to achieve real meeting room success:
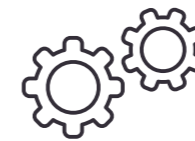
1 Is it fit for purpose?

It is vital that the collaboration solution you choose is fit for purpose, which means that it needs to help you meet your business goals, be a suitable fit for your teams and be within budget. However, most importantly, it must facilitate successful collaboration. To achieve this, it will have to be compatible with the applications your business uses each day, and those used by your customers, such as Microsoft Teams.

2 Is it simple to use?

So many meetings fall short of being constructive because vital IT tools, such as legacy videoconferencing systems, are difficult to use, don't interconnect well, or are too complicated. If you want your workforce to make good use of these new spaces, ensuring meeting room technology is quick and simple to use is vital. You'll also save set-up time and improve collaboration capabilities.

3 Is it cost-effective?

Like any investment, you'll want to see a return on your purchase. Creating a suitable meeting room environment provides payback by improving collaboration and communication capabilities, which make teams and meetings more productive. The right technology will also ensure expensive meeting spaces are used correctly and efficiently by all users.

WHAT IS
COLLABORATION?

"The action of working with someone to produce something."

Oxford English Dictionary

While a bit uninspiring, this definition does pretty much hit the nail on the head, although 'Working with someone', is a little limited, as collaboration often involves many individuals, and teams of people, working together to achieve a common goal. In a business environment, collaboration is critical for success, so it's crucial that you provide your employees with the capability to collaborate successfully, whether they are office-based or working remotely.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE
MEETING ROOM?

Meeting rooms provide private, creative spaces where information can be presented, ideas can be developed and business decisions can be made. With many of us transitioning to a more hybrid work environment, where employees increasingly split their time between the office and homeworking, it is likely that for most organisations the meeting room will continue to play a pivotal part in good communication, fulfilling a role as the central hub for collaboration. However, like many things, it will need to evolve to meet the new challenges we face.

Although, in the long term, businesses may reduce the amount of office space they have, with less need to accommodate so many staff on-site, the role of the meeting room to formalise the process of collaboration remains invaluable. Dedicated meeting spaces will, as ever, help to unite employees to work together to achieve something important. And, by installing interactive, easy-to-use technology in these spaces, any barriers to collaboration, such as location and poor user engagement, can be resolved.

Collaboration is essential for today's modern workplaces, so it's important that you enable your employees to collaborate easily and efficiently, with the best tools, wherever they are based.

WHAT MAKES A
MODERN
HUDDLE ROOM?

Huddle rooms are an excellent and cost-efficient way to foster collaboration and communication in a less formal and relaxed setting. These small, 3-6 person meeting rooms are equipped with audio/video capabilities, and are ideal for both planned and spontaneous team meetings. Rather than reserving a larger room, huddle rooms allow teams to quickly come together to collaborate and discuss important topics. Privacy in such spaces is therefore important, as is the right equipment, such as the following:

1 A communications system, with integrated audio and video collaboration capabilities

This will enable your employees to communicate effectively via your business phone system, or applications such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

2 Separate business and guest Wi-Fi networks:

This will make connecting to meeting resources simple and secure.

3 Integrated cameras, speakers and microphone arrays:

These are perfect for small spaces, and a wide-angle camera will also ensure that all recipients are visible, even when in peripheral view of the camera.

WHAT MAKES A
MODERN MEETING ROOM?

These multipurpose environments are suitable for small and medium-sized meeting and are ideal for hosting interactive sessions with participants located in the room or remotely. They are key collaboration and teamwork spaces, and require a range of technologies to support the demanding goals of interactive sessions, including the following equipment:

1

A unified communications system:
This can make collaborating quicker, easier and more efficient. Wireless presenting tools also make switching presenters simple, allowing you to spend less time setting up.

2

An LED screen:
This is usually the centrepiece of your meeting room, providing a high-definition, good-quality video experience, while interactive screen options are also available for more collaborative sessions.

3

A pan-tilt-zoom camera:
This will enable you to conduct high-quality video collaboration with external participants, and is agnostic to the communications platform used, allowing 'plug and play' capabilities.

4

Audio equipment:
Audio quality is a crucial part of a video meeting, so Prodec offers a range of microphone options, including wireless microphones and a microphone array, to provide crystal clear sound.

5

A room booking system:
Placed next to a meeting room entrance, this can prevent double-booking.

WHAT MAKES A
MODERN BOARDROOM?

As well as being great for board-level meetings, these rooms also act as showcase areas when important customers or partners visit premises. As such, the most successful boardrooms are impressive spaces with high levels of investment. Technology, including the following, therefore needs to be unobtrusive, simple-to-use and bespoke to the room, so each element works perfectly together:

1

A pan-tilt-zoom camera:

This can be situated below the screen for a natural communications experience, when conducting conferences with external board members or customers.

2

Unobtrusive ceiling speakers:

These can ensure everybody in the room can hear external participants, regardless of their location.

3

LED screens and video wall displays:

These can help you conduct impressive presentations to the board and other stakeholders.

4

Integrated table or ceiling microphones:

These can enable all board members to communicate clearly without relying on unsightly hardware being dotted around the room.

5

Room control panels:

These can make quite complex systems easy to use, allowing the host to set up various requirements, including dimming lights, shutting blinds, turning on screens and dialling external participants.

BRING MICROSOFT TEAMS TO ANY
MEETING SPACE

For many of us, Microsoft Teams has quickly become the go-to cloud-based team collaboration platform, providing a comprehensive shared workspace where you can chat, meet, share files, and collaborate with business apps.

With so many organisations now using Teams as their primary platform for collaboration, it's vital to be able to extend its capabilities and the full Microsoft Teams experience into the meeting space. This helps ensure you get the very best out of your investment in the technology, while providing your meeting participants with familiarity and a consistent user experience.

When planning a Microsoft Teams Room, it is essential to select room systems and devices that have been approved and certified by Microsoft. This way, you can be sure that the technical setup of your space is optimised for the best possible experience.

FEATURED PARTNER:

Yealink provides an extensive selection of Microsoft certified devices and room systems that deliver exceptional audio and video quality, helping to facilitate more effective and collaborative teamwork across your meeting spaces.

Yealink

INTERACTIVE PANELS

Interactive, network-attached screens are also a good option for work spaces that are used for information-intensive collaboration. With an interactive panel in your meeting space, you can achieve the following:

> Fluid group collaboration

> Interactive presentations

> Digital annotation of content and applications

> 'Blank-canvas' whiteboard activities

> Screen sharing with local and remote attendees

> High-definition videoconferencing

> Collaboration with homeworkers and remote offices

> ROI through improved efficiency, productivity and reduced travel

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT INTERACTIVE PANELS FOR YOUR
MEETING ROOM?

As is often the case when implementing a new IT solution, the variety you have to choose from can be staggering. Your business size, sector, applications and software all have an impact when deciding upon the most appropriate interactive panels for your organisation's meeting rooms.

First and foremost, you need to consider your users, and think about what your teams use the screens for. If your business will only be annotating Office-based systems, like Word or PowerPoint, your requirements are going to be different to a specialist business that needs to annotate bespoke applications. Different interactive panels support different annotation tools, so matching the right screen to fit individual collaboration, education and training environments is key to success and ROI.

It is also important to note that some panels, such as Clevertouch, the Avocor Windows Collaboration Display (WCD) series and Cisco Webex Boards, have built-in cameras and microphones for video collaboration, and work with other communication tools, such as Microsoft Teams or Cisco Webex Teams.

SIMPLE TOOLS ENABLE GREAT
COLLABORATION

Being able to communicate easily and effectively is critical for successful collaboration. If your meeting participants aren't all present physically, as is now the norm, it is essential that you provide the means to collaborate with complete ease over distance, by supplying tools such as unified communication platforms, including videoconferencing capabilities.

In the past, videoconferencing tools could be so overly intricate and difficult to use that they were often the bane of many a meeting. It is therefore vital that you employ user-friendly technology, and the key to this is that whatever you have in your meeting room should be an extension of what employees are already using on their desktops, thus providing a familiar interface.

With an all-in-one unified communications system in place across your meeting rooms, participants only need to access a single platform for seamless collaboration.

1 Remember good audio quality is vital

Audio issues can completely negate the benefits of videoconferencing, therefore it's important to ensure all meeting rooms are equipped with a suitable solution to ensure the audio quality of your videoconferencing is crystal clear.

2 Headsets make all the difference

You may have the best audio equipment in the world, but if you are holding a videoconference with several participants, it only takes one remote worker to have background noise, such as a dog barking, for your whole meeting to be disrupted. It is therefore advisable to provide headsets to all employees, to minimise such noise.

3 Videoconference cameras for a professional image

In addition, you might want to consider investing in a videoconference camera, to project a more professional image. Although most laptops and PCs do include a built-in camera, they are often quite basic, with regards to resolution and image quality, as well as having limitations regarding viewing angles and controls. Specialist videoconference cameras can supply a better-quality experience, providing higher resolution and panoramic views of the meeting space. Such equipment also generally uses a USB connection, so is compatible with PCs and Macs, and can normally be used with most videoconferencing platforms.

4 Don't neglect your network

If you have insufficient network bandwidth to maintain your organisation's communication and collaboration tools, or if your wireless network isn't built to properly support the meeting room environment, your new technology will be limited. It's therefore vital you take the necessary steps to prevent this from being a problem.

5 Stay safe and secure

Maintaining security across your network should also always be a high priority. Employing separate guest Wi-Fi networks that are simple to access can prevent unauthorised access to your network resources, while maintaining a stable Internet connection for your guests. At the same time, considering how you secure your multi-site collaboration sessions can help prevent data interception when in transit and at rest.

6 Clear away cables

Input cables can be untidy and cause delays with set-up and presentation sharing. By making your meeting room environments wireless, you don't need to worry about recipients having the correct port on their endpoints to present, and swapping presenter can be as simple as pressing a button. So, for a much more seamless experience, consider using wireless presentation tools, such as Cisco Webex Share, Barco and Solstice.

WHICH
TECHNOLOGY BRANDS
SHOULD I USE IN MY MEETING ROOMS?

You're not alone in your quest to make your meeting rooms the best they can be, and we always endeavour to find the best solutions for each of our customers. There are a number of IT vendors that provide high-quality tools which can create excellent business collaboration environments, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with you to find the right equipment for you.

Here are some of TIEVA's favourites:

All-in-one room systems

Complete room systems are one the easiest ways to transform meeting spaces, from small huddle areas to large conference rooms. They deliver everything you need to set up intelligent, collaborative, multi-media meeting spaces, in one easy package, including screens, speakers, codec, camera, touch user interface and microphones.

TIEVA offers a wide range of all-in-one room systems from leading manufacturers in collaboration technology, including Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex and Zoom. These systems are designed to be simple to use, deploy, and manage. They provide rich and collaborative team meeting experiences, support flexible work and enable all participants, no matter their location, to see and hear everyone in the room.

Featured Technologies

As one of the UK's leading audio visual integrators, TIEVA has built strong partnership with many of the worlds leading brands specialising in collaboration technology and AV equipment, including:

About TIEVA

TIEVA specialises in integrating state-of-the-art technologies to offer businesses comprehensive, straightforward solutions, which are proactively supported and enable organisations to operate with ease.

TIEVA is well-practised in supporting organisations of all sizes, and from all sectors, at every stage of their digital journey. By providing the very best technology advice, products and services, we help our customers to achieve digital transformations which increase their employees' engagement, enhance their customers' experiences, generate greater productivity and take their businesses to a whole new level.

Contact us

Need to learn more about how our solutions can help
drive your business forward? Contact our team today!

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