

10 Ways Major Manufacturers are Using Video Conferencing to Increase Business Volume and Decrease Costs.

From managing global supply chains to grappling with shortages of skilled workers, manufacturers are addressing a host of educational and managerial challenges in today's marketplace. After conducting lengthy interviews with six IT managers at manufacturing facilities across the U.S., video conferencing has emerged as the key to solving a host of manufacturing challenges including:

- 1. Execution of better RFPs that win more business.** A large manufacturer in Missouri uses video conferencing to help his team "walk through" RFPs. This allows multiple departments to brainstorm and get started on the different sections of the RFP in a fully-integrated and coordinated manner. As a result, the manufacturer has won more business and generated additional revenues.
- 2. Enforcing quality assurance policies and procedures.** Video conferencing helps formalize the communication process to ensure foreign partners are following U.S. standards. As one IT director states, "Video conferencing has allowed us to snap inspect our Chinese partner's production to be sure they know they are accountable to our standards."
- 3. Finding and screening new offshore partners.** Just as HR does talent acquisition, business development teams use video conferencing to conduct interviews of potential partners in India and other offshore locations. Through the IP-based equipment, staff can see the people and their facilities and get a truer sense of the business environment. Time and money are saved by doing the "leg work" from home. By the time the team traveled to the site for final selections, they had already narrowed the pool to a handful of companies worth visiting.
- 4. Controlling international production processes.** Video conferencing allows one manufacturer to see work in progress around the world on a day-to-day basis. In the past, seeing the far-flung production facilities was limited to a few trips a year, thus reassuring management that projects are moving forward per the schedule.
- 5. Improving customer relationships.** As new customers require close interaction, daily video conferences in the start-up phase keep new projects on track and increase customer satisfaction.



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"Through the operations centre and by using video conferencing, we have access to a much greater range of resources."

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6. Reducing hiring costs. The cost of acquiring talent at one Indiana manufacturer has been significantly reduced by using video conferencing to pre-interview before the candidate is brought to headquarters. Video conferencing also lets the manufacturer demonstrate its flexibility and state-of-the-art workplace, both of which have high appeal to potential new hires.

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7. Retaining highly skilled workers. At one manufacturer, video conferencing allows highly skilled workers who want more job flexibility to keep working for the company as they can work effectively from a home office or remote site. This also serves to satisfy a key company objective to be family-friendly.

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8. Boosting meeting efficiency. Using video conferencing for internal meetings promotes better attendance and participation at one Michigan manufacturer. Time and productivity are preserved by eliminating the need to travel to another location.

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9. Keeping project teams in synch. Project managers and call center managers plan the workloads of their staffs by synchronizing the status and requirements of each on a daily basis. Video conferencing meetings create a face-to-face atmosphere that results in teams working more closely toward the same objectives than does audio-only conferencing, says the IT director.

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10. Delivering consistent training. Through video conferencing, all workers can receive the same training simultaneously. Also, since each training session is available to larger, multi-location audiences, the cost of trainers and travel has been reduced.

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“We started to do some manufacturing in China and were having trouble making ourselves understood. Now, we can pick up a part, show it being assembled and say, ‘See? Like this’. 85% of our travel to Asia has been eliminated.”