Avaya IX Collaboration Unit CU360

SIMPLIFIES THE HUDDLE ROOM USER EXPERIENCE

WHITE PAPER

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INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF MEETING SPACES

The digital transformation era has arrived, and it’s creating unprecedented opportunities for companies of all sizes to become market leaders. Businesses that master digital transformation will see a dramatic increase in revenue and profitability by converging people, processes and technologies, while those that do not will struggle to survive. The amount of churn among the Global 2000 is evidence of this. For example, a Capgemini study found that since 2000, 52% of the Fortune 500 has disappeared through acquisitions or bankruptcies. The study also found that digital organizations control 70% of market share in all industries today. Therefore, making the shift to a digital business must be a top initiative for IT and business leaders.

In the digital era, sustained market leadership is no longer based on which company has the lowest prices, the best products or even the smartest people. Rather, market leaders will be determined by a company’s ability to recognize changes in the business environment and adapt to them faster than the competition. This requires the ability to make the best decisions as quickly as possible while involving the right people.

The challenge for many organizations is that the workforce is now highly distributed. Today, it’s common for a single meeting to involve people from multiple companies located in all regions of the globe, making it impossible for all participants to physically gather in a single location. To fuel innovation and digital success, many companies have invested in meeting room technology to enable workers in the same physical location to collaborate with people who are located elsewhere.

Meetings involve varying numbers of people and have diverse purposes, so it’s important for businesses to build a wide range of meeting spaces to support them, including ad hoc spaces, huddle rooms, small and medium-sized conference rooms, boardrooms and almost any other configuration that can be imagined. This is a stark change from a few years ago, when meeting rooms were built as discrete islands that were unique and not scalable. The old-school approach doesn’t fit anymore, and today more options are available to accommodate different types of meetings. In fact, Wainhouse Research estimates that 50 million huddle rooms currently exist, and they all need to be outfitted with collaboration tools.

Initially, meeting spaces featured a physical whiteboard and usually a conference phone. However, as businesses have become more dynamic and more distributed, a wide range of technology has become mandatory—including phones, screen-sharing systems, video cameras and digital whiteboards. Providing a variety of technology options in meeting spaces is important to satisfy the demands of the quad-generational workforce so that workers can use the tools of their choice (Exhibit 1).

Huddle rooms play a key role in maximizing the potential of digital transformation, but doing so requires overcoming many of the challenges that exist with meeting room systems today.
SECTION II: THE CHALLENGES WITH CURRENT MEETING ROOM SYSTEMS

Meeting room collaboration technologies have been around as long as there have been meeting spaces, and the problem is that most of them address just one particular aspect of meetings. For example, a conference phone lets people communicate using voice, video brings in the visual medium, whiteboards enable users to brainstorm and screen share lets workers share content with one another, regardless of location.

The lack of integration across collaboration tools creates a very disruptive environment, as each service must be turned up individually. In fact, the ZK Research 2019 UC Purchase Intention Study found that the first 15 minutes of every meeting is wasted setting up the technology. Also, there is very little consistency in the user experience among the various meeting room tools, even when they are from the same manufacturer. This combination of inconsistent user experience and limited to no integration causes workers to be frustrated and only use the tool of least resistance, which is often the phone—meaning businesses can’t take advantage of the benefits offered by video and other mediums. Exhibit 2 shows some of the many benefits that video brings to meetings.

Another issue with many collaboration systems is that the interfaces can be difficult for non-technical people, such as business leaders, to use. Companies often must bring in IT personnel to do something as simple as set up a video call. While consumer applications, such as Apple’s FaceTime, can be invoked with a simple tap of the finger, corporate systems are often much more complicated to operate.
Also, because of the difficulty involved in using the systems and the lack of interoperability, the meeting experience can often vary from person to person. For example, in the same meeting, some participants may connect to video or voice only, while others are on video and others can see the screen share. This is disruptive to say the least and leads to unproductive working time.

Lastly, most current meeting room solutions do not interoperate with cloud services very well. Some might support a single cloud service, but this limits the choice users have and prevents them from using the tools that they like to use.

### Exhibit 2: The Many Benefits of Enterprise Video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased learning</td>
<td>Participants learn 200% more with video than with audio only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved rate of absorption</td>
<td>Participants in video meetings absorb information up to 40% faster than those using voice communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmented content retention</td>
<td>Attendees in video conferencing sessions retain 38% more information than those participating in audio calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced persuasiveness</td>
<td>Video increases the power of persuasion by 43% over audio or written communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased impact of communications</td>
<td>Video increases the impact of communications by 67%, while audio increases the impact by just 23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ZK Research, 2019
Effective collaboration in huddle rooms is critical to an organization’s digital success, but achieving it requires a solution that rethinks how huddle room technology should be deployed.

SECTION III: AVAYA IX CU360 REDEFINES HUDDLE ROOMS

The Avaya Intelligent eXperience (IX) Collaboration Unit 360 (CU360) is a purpose-built collaboration device designed for the cloud era. This compact and all-in-one device was built to simplify the huddle room experience. It can be used either on its own to enable individual workgroups or SMBs to collaborate better, or as a video endpoint to expand an organization’s existing collaboration infrastructure.

The Avaya IX CU360 is designed to be set up in minutes and delivers best-in-class audio, video and content sharing without requiring the use of an in-room computer or a worker’s laptop. Other key product features include the following:

- Full 1080p video, 4K camera and 4K display support
- Interoperability with third-party H.323 and SIP devices
- Easy integration with Avaya UC including Avaya Aura®, Avaya IP Office® and Avaya IX™ Meetings
- Support for Android™ apps that can enhance the collaboration experience (Android is a trademark of Google LLC)
- Bluetooth connectivity and HDMI connections
- Wired Ethernet and Wi-Fi connectivity
- 25-language immersive user interface
- API for endpoint control
- Best-in-class microphone array
- Embedded encryption for security
- IPv4 and IPv6 simultaneous support
- Compatibility with any third-party cloud-delivered collaboration service
- Automated firmware upgrades
- Speaker tracking technology
- Local recording capabilities
- Support for third-party touchscreens, keyboards and mice

Businesses that choose to deploy the Avaya IX CU360 will realize several benefits, including the following:

**Low total cost of ownership:** The device has all the features of a collaboration solution that is often two to five times more expensive. Because of its all-in-one nature, meetings are quick to start and will not require any IT time.
Fast and easy deployment: Customers that connect the device over Wi-Fi only need to connect two cables: power and HDMI. When Ethernet is used, a third cable is required for network connectivity—but that’s all there is for cabling. Also, the device is designed to rest on top of any display and has an integrated video codec, microphone and Bluetooth, so there are no other cables anywhere (Exhibit 3). There is also an easy-to-use remote that includes a full keyboard to simplify setup.

Increased collaboration: Because the device is simple to use and includes all the features required in a huddle room, users are more likely to use video and content sharing instead of audio only.

Support for third-party applications: The Avaya IX CU360 is a device for Android and includes an interface into an app store where third-party applications can be installed. This lets customers use the collaboration tools they are comfortable with. Exhibit 4 shows the interface the CU360 offers to download applications.

Smart collaboration: Content and applications can be shared wirelessly from a mobile device. Avaya uses industry standards, so the device will work with most third-party cloud services and room systems.

Secure solution: The CU360 has integrated security to ensure conversations can’t be eavesdropped on or content stolen.

SECTION IV: ZK RESEARCH’S AVAYA IX CU360 REVIEW

ZK Research recently requested a CU360 from Avaya to review. We have evaluated several similar devices from other manufacturers and wanted to see if the product was as Avaya pro-
motes. After installing the device and thoroughly testing it, ZK Research validates all the features above. In fact, we believe the device has game-changing potential for huddle rooms for the following reasons:

A true all-in-one device: Many vendors now make “all-in-one devices” for huddle rooms, but not all are created equal. Most require users to connect the device into a PC, adding extra complexity. The Avaya IX CU360 has a built-in codec, so no PC is required. However, if a user wants to connect the device to a computer, that option exists.

Next-generation collaboration application support: Although Avaya provides its own collaboration applications, workers can use the device with any cloud-delivered app. Based on interviews with collaboration buyers, ZK Research estimates that most companies use an average of four to five different apps on a daily basis, and the Avaya IX CU360 can support all of them.

Disruptive pricing: Typical pricing for systems similar to the CU360 ranges from $1,500 to $3,000 (list price). Avaya has aggressively priced its product at $899 (list price). Customers that buy in volume can expect further discounts from there. Avaya has an alternative pricing model known as “Device as a Service,” where customers pay a per-device, per-month fee for it. This starts at $20 per month and goes down depending on options.
**Meeting rooms need to have technology capable of bringing in remote participants.**

**Speaker tracking:** This feature ensures the camera automatically tracks speakers as they move around a room so there is no need to constantly refocus. Speaker tracking is a common feature on high-end room systems, but Avaya has made it available in the CU360.

**Automated firmware updates:** Firmware updates are extremely important to room systems to ensure the latest and greatest features are being used. However, firmware updates are difficult to implement, as an IT person typically must log into each system. The Avaya IX CU360 fully automates the process of updating firmware so zero IT time is required.

**Flexibility in input and output devices:** Many conference room endpoints come with an input device, such as a remote control, and the Avaya IX CU360 is no different. However, the Avaya device also supports third-party keyboards, mice and touchscreens, giving customers the ultimate in flexibility in how they want to interact with it.

**Wireless support:** Conference room devices are typically connected using a wired connection, which makes sense, as they are stationary. However, in some situations, there is no convenient Ethernet jack, making connectivity difficult. For these use cases, Avaya has included Wi-Fi support. This also makes it possible to set up the device in a remote location, home office or any other place the company may want.

**Fast setup:** All device manufacturers have strived to make their devices easier to set up, but this is where Avaya has made significant progress. It took ZK Research less than five minutes to set up the device, from unboxing to having the system online and ready to go (Exhibit 5).

**Support for local recording:** This feature allows any meeting to be recorded to a local USB flash drive instead of having to use a cloud service for recording, which is ideal for budget-minded small businesses.

## SECTION V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The digital era has arrived and is pushing businesses to be fast and agile. Business leaders are striving to move with unprecedented speed, as decisions must be made quickly and then executed on. Consequently, there is an emphasis on huddle rooms as workers need to come together quickly, make critical decisions and then move on to the next task. Meeting rooms need to have technology capable of bringing in remote participants. Voice is certainly necessary, but video, content sharing and other collaborative tools are now must-haves.

The explosion in the number of meeting rooms and the range of equipment in them is creating a headache for users. More and more new devices are being included in the meeting room, making it
next to impossible for employees to start working quickly. The Avaya IX CU360 redefines meetings by delivering an all-in-one solution that’s fast and easy to deploy as well as dead simple to use. Business and IT leaders should mandate the outfitting of huddle rooms with collaboration tools, and ZK Research offers the following recommendations to help with the process:

Focus on simplicity and the user experience. There are many huddle room solutions on the market today, all of which can deliver audio, voice and content sharing. The key differentiator will be how easy these devices are for workers to use. Those that are not easy to use will see low utilization, leading to wasted money. Choose a solution that’s easy to deploy but also intuitive for workers to use.

Evaluate a wide range of vendors. When making a technology purchase, it’s often easy to choose a market leader or the incumbent. But huddle room dynamics have changed, and making a decision based on legacy criteria may lead to a poor choice. Select a vendor that has a device purpose built for this era of collaboration.

Choose an open platform. Many excellent huddle room tools offer a great experience but only work with that manufacturer’s software. Choose a vendor that is open and can support a wide range of third-party applications.