

The New Normal: Choosing a Video Platform

With millions of people locked down and working from home, companies have had to scramble to figure out which video conferencing platform works best for their business needs.

Sales presentations, customer outreach and team meetings are more successful when you can monitor facial expressions or read the mood of the virtual room. If you can't physically be there, video conferencing is the next best thing. But which video conferencing tool should you use? We've broken down some of the finer points of the top tools on the market to make it easier for you to decide which video conferencing platform is best for you and your business.

BLUEJEANS

The overall customer rating for Bluejeans is very high. It has all the bells and whistles from calendar integration to its incredibly easy setup. It is also known for its good call quality. Should things go awry, their customer service is among the best. There are no easy private chat features, so it is better for group business calls instead of on-one-one meetings.

Pricing

- Free Trial
- Basic Service under \$10/month

Using the Platform

- Simple setup
- Easy to use
- Quality customer support
- Easy to schedule meetings

Features

- Ability to record meetings
- Whiteboard
- Mobile app
- Screen sharing



CISCO WEBEX MEETINGS

This platform carries several essential qualities. One highlight is the ability to conference in on a mobile number from the phone app and still have the same features as a desktop computer. There are a few complaints about the video lag during calls and issues signing on to the service. Nevertheless, there are high marks given for their collaboration tools.

Pricing

- Free version
- Starter version for business \$11 - \$20/month

Technical

- Simple setup
- Ease of meeting scheduling
- Quality tech support
- Easy to use

Features

- Whiteboard
- Background noise detection
- In-app polling capabilities
- Screen sharing

GOTOMEETING

This platform is seen as a quality product at a reasonable price. Overall, there are mostly compliments about it for audio and video presentations. It's well-known for its reliability and has fewer instances of mid-call buffering or other pesky technical issues. Recordings done on their cloud are deleted after a year, which may be an issue for organizations that want to save research calls to reference later on.

Pricing

- Free trial
- Basic Service \$11 - \$20/month

Using the Platform

- Simple setup
- Moderately easy to use
- Good option for 50-1,000 participants

Features

- Option to record meetings
- Mobile app
- Screen sharing

JOIN.ME

There were issues with Join.me's high-resolution displays not showing the desktop application correctly, but this no longer seems to be an issue. The free, basic plan includes screen sharing with voice-over-IP calling for up to ten participants. It has email support and up to three simultaneous video feeds.

Pricing

- Free trial
- Basic service under \$10/month

Using the Platform

- Simple setup
- Easy to schedule meetings
- Quality tech support
- Easy to use
- Good for one-on-one meetings or for small groups

Features

- Screen sharing
- Create your backgrounds for video meetings

MICROSOFT TEAMS

With integrated connectivity to MS Office 365 and a growing list of features, Teams is quickly becoming a go-to option for many companies. It is the incoming replacement for Skype for Business and can be used as an inter-office messaging platform as well for videoconferencing. It is designed to be an all-in-one workplace solution and may tick the right boxes for many Microsoft 365 users.

Pricing

- Free version (without all the bells and whistles)
- Microsoft 365 Business subscriptions from \$5 - \$20/month

Technical

- Ease of meeting scheduling
- Quality tech support

- Full integration with Microsoft 365
- Reliable audio and video quality

Features

- Meetings can include up to 10,000 participants
- File and screen sharing
- Can create video backgrounds
- Highly customizable

SKYPE

Once upon a time everyone Skyped. However, the bugs, glitches, notoriously ill-timed software updates, complicated operation and spam have since knocked Skype from grace. Despite its issues, Skype has been around for nearly 20 years. Most people are familiar with it and probably have it installed on their computers and phone. If it is kept up to date, it is a great backup option.

Pricing

- Free
- Skype for Business is a paid enterprise option that is being replaced by Microsoft Teams

Using the Platform

- Can sign on via Microsoft's product suite
- Good video and audio quality

Features

- Emailable link for video conferencing
- Mobile app
- Screen sharing

ZOOM

You can't beat the price (free) for the basic service, which includes 100 participants for 40-minute meetings. It is just a click or two and you are Zooming away. They recently fell victim to "zoombombing" and many other security and user privacy issues, but they working on fixing those problems.

Pricing

- Free basic service
- Pro, basic and enterprise paid options

Using the Platform

- Simple set up

- Very easy to use
- Quality tech support
- Easy to schedule meetings

Features

- Ability to record meetings
- Whiteboard
- Mobile app
- Screen sharing

These are just a few of the hundreds of products out there. Do your homework to find the one that is right for you and be sure to ask around to find out what is working for others. The best reviews could come from people you know who are using video conferencing tools. Their experience could save you time, money and the pain of trial and error.