

# How the Use of **Video Collaboration** is Transforming the Legal World

*Access to video means that legal experts can work for any customer in the world and handle interviews and research from any location.*



*Video also enables an agile response to time-sensitive demands.*



Law firms recognize the need to **integrate technology** into their workflow. In fact, a recent study revealed that 37% of legal departments plan to increase spending on technology.<sup>1</sup> With the growing use of video by legal firms, more lawyers are going global with their expertise and skill set. Geography is no longer a barrier; without the need to travel, top legal experts can be tapped for services and support over video by any customer in any location. This is leading to greater competitive advantages and globalization for law firms of all sizes.

Globalization has magnified the inherent challenges of managing communication when parties are dispersed in multiple locations. With video, lawyers can collaborate with internal and external stakeholders, partners and experts, across multiple locations. Video also enables an agile response to time-sensitive demands.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ten Key Results from a Legal Department Survey*, <http://businessoflawblog.com/2014/11/optimistic-legal-departments/>, Lexis Nexis, 2015.

The majority (94%) of law firm leaders believe a focus on **improved practice efficiency**

will remain a permanent feature of the legal market, as will increased price competition. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) believes that more price competition over the next decade may lead law firms to rethink their project staffing, to reduce costs to clients.<sup>2</sup> However, only 30% have taken on the really challenging task of re-engineering work processes.<sup>3</sup> Beyond just lowering the costs for travel, video collaboration also increases efficiency, enabling lawyers to fit in more meetings, client interviews and testimonials in a shorter period of time. This opens up the possibility of offering clients fixed fees for services, as opposed to hourly charges.

“We are seeing an evolving cost structure in the legal market,” states Sayed Darwish, Chief Legal Officer at Polycom “There is a growing demand to maximize efficiency to meet the customer expectation for controlling legal spend.”

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<sup>2</sup> *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition*, [www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/lawyers.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/lawyers.htm), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Lawyers.

<sup>3</sup> *2014 Law Firms in Transition*, Altman Weil, [www.altmanweil.com/dir\\_docs/resource/f68236ab-d51f-4d81-8172-96e8d47387e3\\_document.pdf](http://www.altmanweil.com/dir_docs/resource/f68236ab-d51f-4d81-8172-96e8d47387e3_document.pdf), 2014.

Video collaboration **reduces the inefficiency and disruption** of in-person meetings

while preserving the benefits of face-to-face communication. An improvement in operational efficiency optimizes resources and drives growth. Employing technology to streamline workflow is enabling legal services to be delivered to a greater number of clients and improving the profitability of non-hourly billing.



With cases that involve a large number of witnesses, video interviews are condensing the timeline. Interviews that would have been protracted over a longer period of time due to schedule coordination and travel are efficiently managed in a shorter timeframe. Multiple interviews can easily be conducted in a single day.

Video depositions not only save time and travel costs, but also permit greater collaboration. Video conferencing allows attorneys to go off the record, mute the microphone and consult with co-counsel. The ability to have a verbal discussion is more efficient and accurate than passing written notes, as is the practice when deposing in-person.

Video collaboration supports in-house counsel in minimizing disruption for their executives. Non-litigation issues that would require in-person communication can be conducted using video, which is far less disruptive to executive schedules.

<sup>1</sup> *Ten Key Results from a Legal Department Survey*, <http://businessoflawblog.com/2014/11/optimistic-legal-departments/>, Lexis Nexis, 2015.

Using video to interview is another way that **collaboration technology** is changing the legal industry. By eliminating the need to fly candidates in from remote locations, firms can expand the talent pool. This is even more critical as staffing models and hybrid roles increase and the demand for specialized expertise grows.<sup>4</sup> Scheduling a video interview is also more efficient which can streamline the hiring process.

Legal firms are also developing mock courtrooms inside their bricks and mortar locations. These high-tech collaboration spaces bring the ability to strengthen courtroom skills, and refine strategy before trial. Video recordings provide the capability to assess strengths and weaknesses, gain feedback and view juror deliberations. This can also function as a teaching tool, allowing younger associates to gain practical experience and hone their skills. Mock courtrooms can also eliminate travel for out-of-area clients and reduce the costs of litigation.

Other new uses for video in the legal market include hosting compliance training, internally or externally for clients. This is another form of sharing expertise in an efficient way.

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<sup>4</sup> *Four Trends That Will Change Legal Practice Management in 2015*, [www.roberthalf.com/legal/blog/4-trends-that-will-change-legal-practice-management-in-2015](http://www.roberthalf.com/legal/blog/4-trends-that-will-change-legal-practice-management-in-2015), Robert Half Legal, 2015.

“Law firms are adopting video technologies like any other type of business to expand their training on important issues beyond just compliance,” explains Sayed. “Video-based training can be used for CLE (continuing legal education) credits, bringing certified courses to the masses online and keeping the two-way interaction of a real classroom.”



A popular technology in any industry today is Skype for Business, being used on desktops and also in conference rooms with partners like Polycom. A great way to increase adoption of video conferencing rooms is to remove the barrier of understanding how to launch a call and invite guests from anywhere. Skype with Polycom's legacy systems makes this possible.

### About **Whitlock**

Whitlock is a video collaboration company that provides strategy, management, technologies and support to the world's largest and most innovative businesses. For more details on collaboration in the legal industry, reach out to Whitlock, a Platinum Polycom Solutions Advisor and Microsoft Gold Communications Partner, at **800.726.9843** or email us at **information@whitlock.com**.

### About **Polycom**

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience, the broadest multi-vendor interoperability and unmatched investment protection. Visit [www.polycom.com](http://www.polycom.com) to learn more.