

GameChanger

Transformation Through Technology



The Value of Video Conferencing

At the end of March, the General Services Administration shut down 13 telework centers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area citing costs that outweighed income. The irony? The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 calls for more federal agencies to allow employees to work remotely. But the act provides no funding, and each center cost about \$3 million a year to operate.

The viability of the centers was questionable anyway. A March 2011 report by LifeSize, a division of Logitech, found that almost 70 percent of the 286 federal workers it surveyed for “Teleworking Opinions in the US Government: Telework Centers Versus Work from Home” said they would not use a GSA telework center if they were eligible to telework.

Outfitted with high-quality technology including secure, scalable and interoperable video conferencing, the centers were supposed to provide an alternative workplace for government employees. But, 41.8 percent of respondents felt that telework centers offer no technological advantage over working from home, the survey found, and nearly 60 percent said they would prefer home to a center if technology and quality of service for teleworking were identical at both locations.

Telework centers were established in the 1990s for several reasons. The benefits to employers included greater employee retention and recruitment, reduced absenteeism and more productivity because workers could focus on work rather than office distractions or commuting worries. For workers, the shorter commute meant more time at home, which translated into less work-related stress and more job satisfaction. Plus, teleworking is environmentally friendly. Shorter drives to work mean less traffic and pollution.

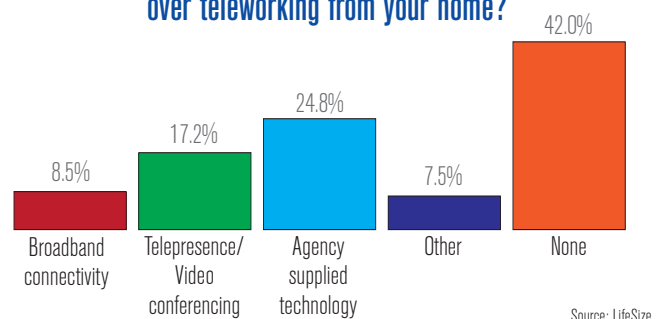
In theory, the centers are high-tech facilities with better security than home computer systems and enhanced – and often more expensive – technology, such as broadband connections, secure access to agency applications, high-definition (HD) video conferencing and easily accessible technical support. But workers using the centers found that they didn’t help much. For instance, they still had to commute to them. “A major factor in determining if I would use a telework center is the distance from my home to the center. If the distance is about the same or greater, I would rather go to my office than a telework center,” a survey respondent said.

As LifeSize’s survey shows, a much more attractive solution is working from home. And technology has evolved in such a way that telework centers’ function can translate to work stations in employees’ homes.

Take, for instance, HD video conferencing solutions from LifeSize. LifeSize’s products meet the lowest bandwidth

requirements – 384 kilobits per second (Kbps) for cable TV-quality images and 1 megabit per second (Mbps) for HD quality – and are as secure as federal systems because they meet federal standards and requirements to protect sensitive communications and ensure the privacy of personally identifiable information data.

What is the main benefit you believe a telework center offers over teleworking from your home?



LifeSize’s technical capabilities meet:

- Federal Information Processing Standards 140-2.
- H.235 Advanced Encryption Standards.
- Interoperability Certification and Information Assurance accreditation from the Joint Interoperability Test Command.
- The Defense Department Unified Capabilities Approved Products List.
- IPv6 requirements.

What’s more, LifeSize products are scalable and interoperable, meaning they can grow with your needs. As a founding member of the Unified Communications Interoperability Forum, LifeSize ensures its products can work seamlessly with other UC solutions. More importantly, they are easy to deploy and use, connecting office to home in only 15 minutes, and they guarantee the lowest total cost of ownership, with prices starting at less than \$2,500 MSRP.

A catch: The high quality of LifeSize’s products makes teleworking in your pajamas a thing of the past. Low latency and high frame rates of at least 30 frames per second help workers feel like they’re truly face-to-face. That sense of in-person collaboration helps to cultivate business relationships.

LifeSize is a pioneer and world leader in high-definition video collaboration. Designed to make video conferencing truly universal, our full range of open-standards-based systems offer enterprise-class, information technology-friendly technologies that enable genuine human interaction over any distance. Founded in 2003 and acquired by Logitech in 2009, LifeSize, with its commitment to relentless innovation, continues to extend the highest-quality video conferencing capabilities to anyone, anywhere.



For more information please visit www.LifeSize.com.