The Buyer's Guide to

Smart Yet Simple Video Collaboration Hardware

neat.

Introduction

Today’s meeting room stakes

The way we meet has permanently changed. Hybrid work is now the norm, not the exception, and organizations of all sizes are under pressure to provide seamless, high-quality video meetings in every space, from small, medium, and large conference rooms to open office areas and beyond, to help their global workforces stay closely aligned, inspired, and productive.

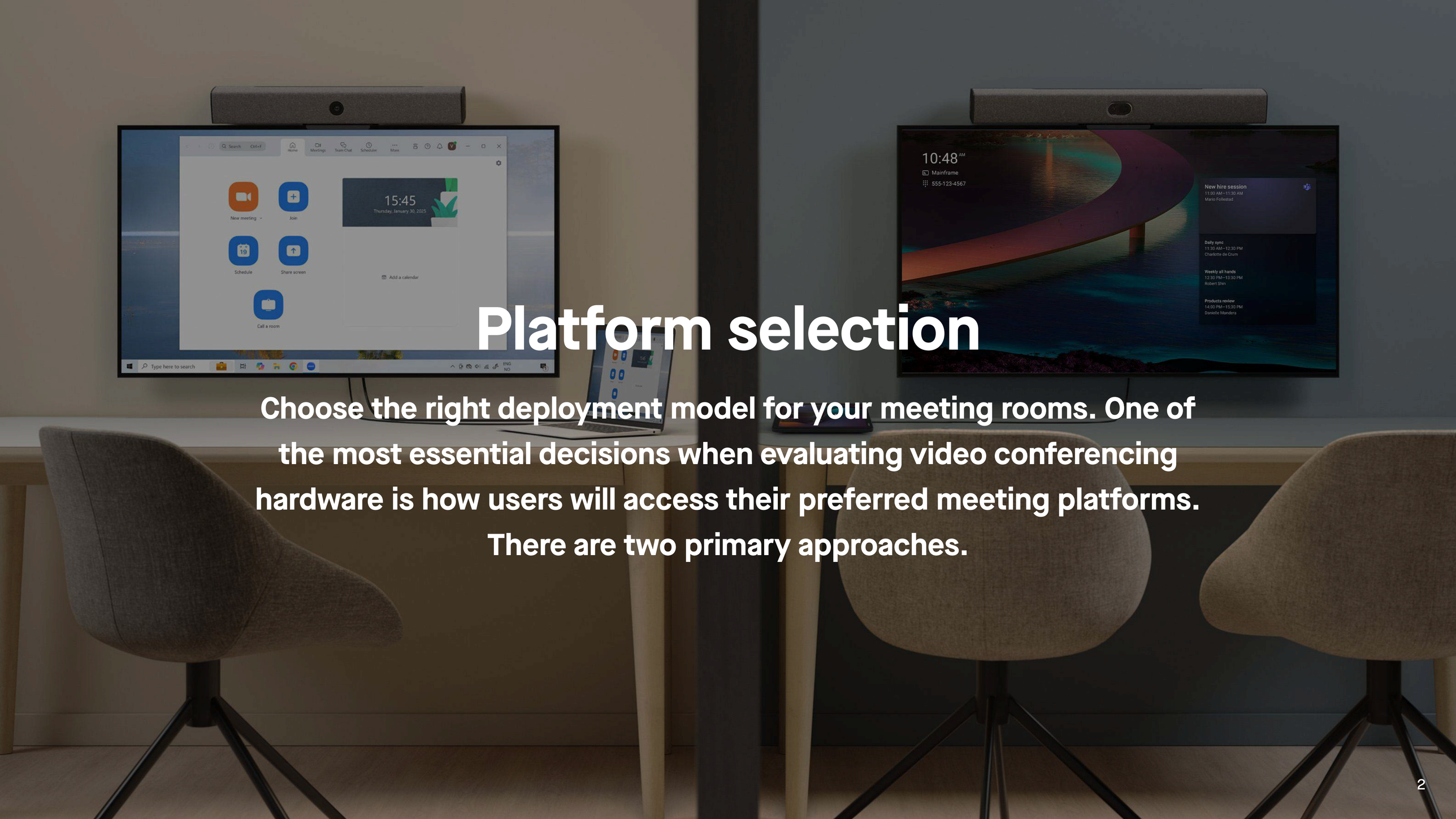
Choosing the right video conferencing hardware for your organization isn't just about specs; it's about delivering a consistently simple, reliable and scalable experience for everyone, whether at the office or working remotely.

This eGuide will help you:

- Understand what to look for in modern meeting room hardware.
- Avoid common pitfalls that increase costs and IT workload.
- Make informed decisions that reduce friction, improve usability, and future-proof your meeting spaces.

Throughout the eGuide, you'll discover six key principles that deliver exceptional video collaboration hardware for today's dynamic, modern workforce and working environments.

1. Platform selection
2. Simple to set up and operate
3. Remote management
4. Flexibility
5. Intelligence
6. Total cost of ownership (TCO)



Platform selection

Choose the right deployment model for your meeting rooms. One of the most essential decisions when evaluating video conferencing hardware is how users will access their preferred meeting platforms. There are two primary approaches.

Native or BYOD

Native platform support

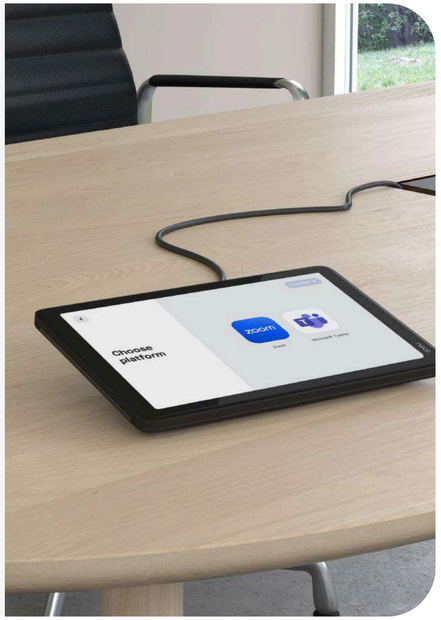
Native support means the hardware is purpose-built to run a specific platform—such as Zoom Rooms, Microsoft Teams Rooms, Google Meet, or similar—directly on the device without needing an external computer.

Benefits include:

- A consistent, ready-to-use interface across rooms.
- Calendar integration gives you faster meeting starts with “one button to join”
- Wireless content sharing.
- Remote manageability for IT teams.

Considerations:

- Additional licenses are typically required, but the investment pays off long-term with added productivity.
- Connections to third-party meeting apps may not be full-featured.



Bring your own device (BYOD)

BYOD allows users to connect their laptops to the room’s audio/video system to run the meeting on the platform of their choice. BYOD provides maximum flexibility, especially in mixed-platform environments. Explore BYOD trends in this Frost & Sullivan eBook.

Benefits include:

- Supports a wider range of meeting apps.
- Familiar user experience—employees use their own devices.
- Lower procurement costs.

Considerations:

- Users are responsible for connecting and launching meetings.
- Experience can vary depending on personal device and setup.
- Advanced native room features like digital whiteboarding, dual content share, etc, would be lacking.

The takeaway: Both approaches have their place. BYOD offers flexibility, especially in dynamic environments. Native platform support brings simplicity, consistency, and manageability—key advantages when scaling across multiple rooms or locations. The best choice depends on your organization’s priorities.

Simplicity that scales

Installation is one of the biggest challenges in deploying video conferencing hardware across multiple meeting rooms, especially when managing spaces across different offices; the complexity and costs quickly add up.

Not long ago, deploying video technology in meeting spaces meant combining multiple components from different vendors, such as cameras, microphones, speakers, codecs, control panels, and displays. The more components people added, the messier the cabling got, increasing complexity, failure points, and installation time. Factor in pro AV integration, and timelines and budgets quickly spiraled.

Today, the most efficient IT teams look for video conferencing hardware that reduces friction and solutions that are easier to deploy, support, and scale. Recent innovations have consolidated what used to be multiple peripheral devices into unified solutions such as:

- Video bars with an integrated camera, microphones, speakers, and CPU.
- All-in-one touch displays that combine audiovisuals, CPU, and control in a single device.
- Modular components that connect directly over the network, minimizing in-room cabling and installation time.

The result is a scalable foundation that lets IT teams standardize across spaces without compromising quality or user experience. These setups don't just cut down the time it takes to install them, they also:

Streamline firmware updates for easier maintenance.	Minimize compatibility issues between endpoints.	Make troubleshooting quicker and easier.	Support repeatable deployments across locations.

When simplicity scales, your IT team scales with it. In other words, simpler solutions enable your IT team to scale easily and efficiently.

See how simplifying meeting room technology impacted organizations through this customer experience survey report.

Remote management capabilities

Once you've deployed your video hardware, uptime and manageability become the priority. When issues arise in your meeting spaces, productivity suffers, impacting management, employees and IT. That's why remote management isn't an option. It's a necessity for business continuity, growth, and success.

A centralized system is the most effective way to scale for IT teams supporting dozens or hundreds of rooms. It includes a single-pane dashboard allowing you to monitor, manage, and troubleshoot devices across all locations from your HQ or anywhere else globally.

Look for platforms that provide:

- Real-time device status, room occupancy and environment monitoring.
- Remote control, configuration, and filtering.
- Firmware and software update management.
- Role-based access controls for distributed admin support.

Ensure the hardware supports enterprise-grade security protocols for device access, data encryption, and network protection—especially when managing rooms across multiple locations.

With a clear, comprehensive management system, IT teams can quickly resolve issues and optimize performance without being physically present. This reduces downtime, minimizes manual workload, and ensures meeting spaces stay fully operational.

Centralized management platforms significantly impact the total cost of ownership (TCO). They lead to fewer service calls, faster response times, and the ability to scale your video deployment without increasing your headcount.

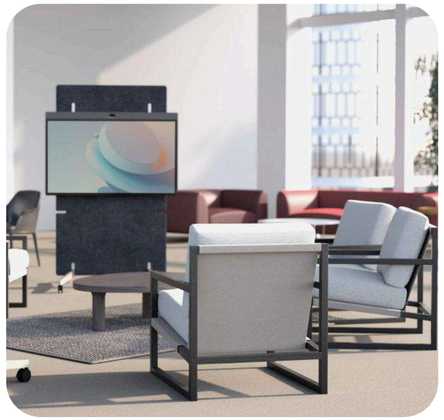
If you're working with limited resources or expanding fast, remote manageability keeps your operation lean and the experience efficient and consistent.

Flexibility for every space and workflow

Meeting rooms aren’t one-size-fits-all; your video conferencing hardware shouldn’t be either. Each environment has different requirements for layout, acoustics, and user behavior, from open huddle areas to executive boardrooms to multipurpose spaces. Flexibility in hardware design and deployment allows you to support every type of room and adapt to the changing demands of the office space.

Key areas to evaluate:

Form factor variety: Does the vendor's portfolio support small to large rooms or open office areas? Does it support fixed installations, dynamic use cases, and mobile needs (e.g., rolling carts or shared spaces)?



Mounting and positioning options: Whether wall-mounted, placed on a table or surface, or hung from the ceiling, your hardware should adapt to your space, not force a redesign.

Platform compatibility: Does the system work out of the box with your preferred meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom or Microsoft Teams)? Can it support BYOD (bring your own device) use cases when needed?

Modular pairing, not hardwiring: The ability to expand your setup, adding devices like companion cameras, additional microphones, or touch controllers, shouldn't mean running more cables or reconfiguring the room. Look for systems where you can pair components over the network and manage them centrally.

Flexibility like this simplifies deployment and keeps your environment adaptable. As your workplace evolves, your video systems should scale with you without needing constant reinvestment or reinstallation. More importantly, they should support various workplace applications, not just video conferencing.

A 2025 Zebracat study reported that 67% of users believe having access to collaboration tools within the video platform itself increases meeting productivity. Ensure that your devices can support your employees' preferred collaboration software.

Organizations can tailor the meeting experience to their teams' work styles and workflows by providing users with access to best-of-breed collaboration, scheduling, and productivity apps. This flexibility creates better in-room experiences, improves productivity, and future-proofs your investment as workplace needs evolve.

Learn more about flexible collaboration trends in this vBook from Frost & Sullivan.

Built-in intelligence for smarter meetings

Modern video conferencing hardware should do more than connect people—it should enhance the meeting experience through built-in intelligence. AI and advanced sensors are now essential for creating seamless meetings, especially in hybrid work environments. When evaluating solutions, consider how intelligent capabilities directly support productivity.

Look for features like:

- **Auto-framing and speaker tracking:** Keep participants in view and focused, creating a more natural and inclusive experience.
- **Camera intelligence for boundary setting:** Ensure your system can accurately identify and frame active meeting participants within a defined area—while ignoring objects or visuals outside the space that can be distracting.
- **Noise suppression and voice enhancement:** Clear audio doesn't just help people hear better; it improves the accuracy of AI-powered transcription, translation, and meeting summaries.
- **People counting and room analytics:** Help track room usage and optimize space planning without extra sensors or systems.

Smarter devices also reduce infrastructure needs. If the endpoint has built-in audio intelligence, it reduces the need for external third-party audio solutions. When the system does the heavy lifting, people enjoy better meetings, and IT can support more rooms with fewer hassles or headaches.

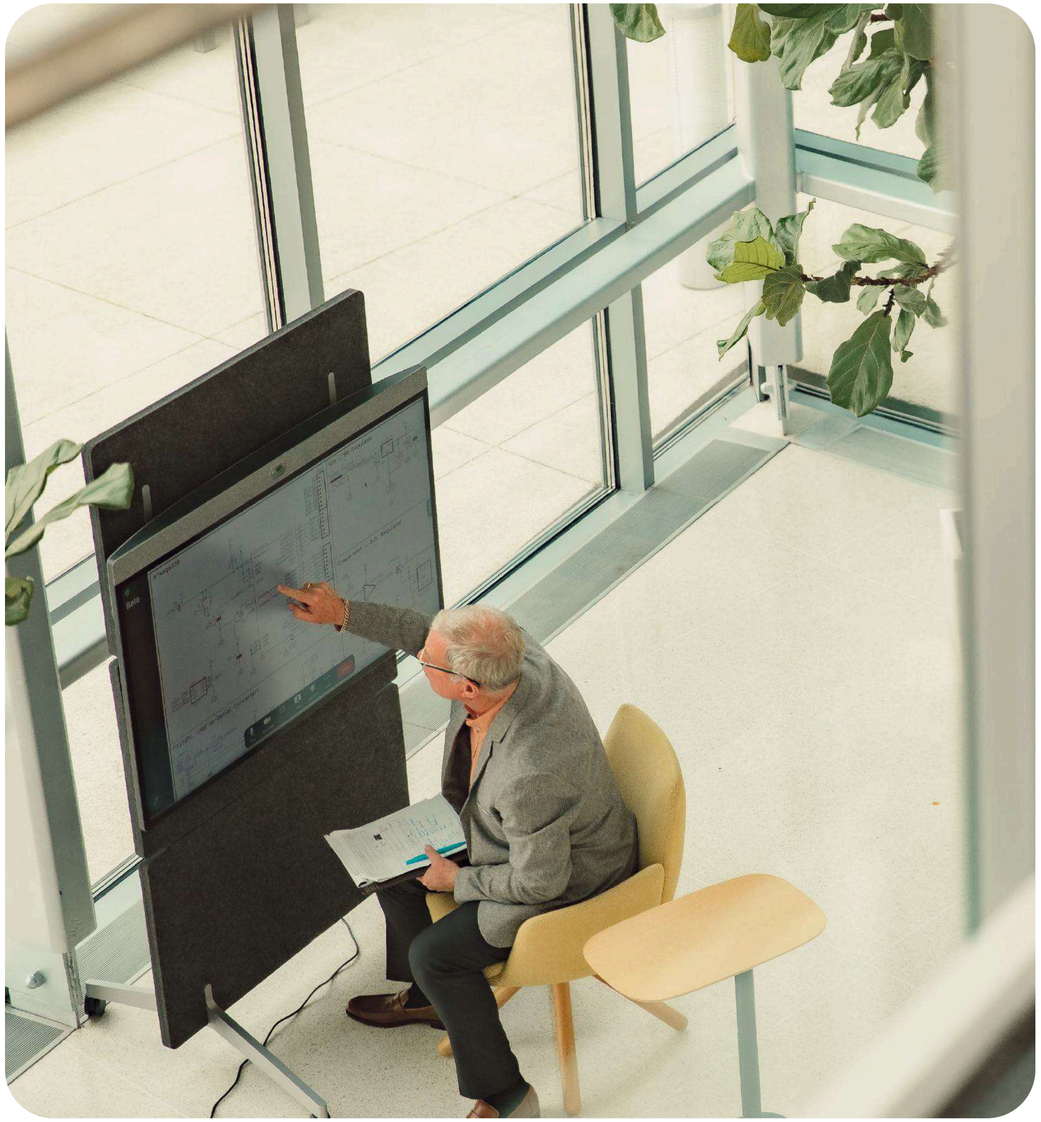
For large, complex, or acoustically challenging meeting spaces where you may need to pair your devices with other systems to boost your audio and video output, seek the simplest solutions.

Total cost of ownership (TCO)

Price tags only tell part of the story when evaluating video conferencing hardware. The real cost shows up over time—in deployment effort, support workload, reliability, and upgrade paths. TCO takes all of that into account.

The biggest TCO drivers to watch out for are:

- **Installation time and complexity:** Simpler setups save money upfront. Integrated devices with fewer components require less time, fewer installers, and lower room readiness costs.
- **Remote management and troubleshooting:** If your IT team can't manage devices centrally, you're paying for lost time, increased travel, and user frustration. Smart remote tools reduce overhead and prevent costly downtime.
- **Hardware reliability and lifespan:** Systems built and tested end-to-end by a single vendor are less likely to fail or suffer compatibility issues.
- **Scalability:** Adding more rooms shouldn't mean starting over. Flexible, modular systems help avoid costly rework as your needs evolve.
- **Support and maintenance costs:** Fewer cables, fewer connections, fewer vendors. All of it adds up to fewer headaches—and fewer service calls.



Ultimately, high-TCO systems cost more, create user friction, and strain your IT team. Choosing the proper hardware upfront gives you a smoother path forward and protects your long-term investment.

Learn about the industry shifting toward integrated, all-in-one solutions that simplify deployment and reduce long-term TCO by minimizing the need for separate components, maintenance, and IT support.

Read the full report from Futurum.

Video technology evaluation checklist

When evaluating video technology vendors, ask yourself the following questions. These will help you identify solutions that reduce complexity, scale efficiently, and support great meeting experiences without overloading IT.

1. Platform support

- ☐ Is the system certified for major video platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams?
- ☐ Can it support BYOD scenarios when needed?
- ☐ What applications does the solution support? How are the apps managed?

2. Setup and installation

- ☐ How long does it typically take to deploy in a single room?
- ☐ How many components are required to get a room up and running?
- ☐ Does the hardware require professional integrators to install and set up?
- ☐ Can devices connect directly over the network, minimizing in-room cabling and installation time?
- ☐ Is the system plug-and-play, or does it require custom integration?

3. Remote management and monitoring

- ☐ Can all devices be monitored and managed from one centralized dashboard?
- ☐ Can I remotely access this meeting room hardware?
- ☐ Do management features require being connected via LAN or On-Prem?
- ☐ Does the management platform integrate with other platforms?

4. Flexibility and scalability

- ☐ Does the solution support different room sizes and layouts (small, medium, large, mobile)?
- ☐ Does the provider support use cases outside of the meeting room (i.e., visitor management, digital signage, scheduling)?
- ☐ Can the hardware be mobile to adapt to different workspaces quickly?
- ☐ Is the system adaptable as your spaces and collaboration needs evolve?
- ☐ Are cables used proprietarily, or do they follow industry standards?

5. Intelligence and experience

- ☐ Are AI-driven features like auto-framing, speaker tracking, and noise suppression built-in?
- ☐ Does the audio quality support dereverberation, background noise suppression for better clarity?
- ☐ Are people counting and usage analytics available?
- ☐ What is your history of releasing new software features and fixing bugs?

6. Total cost of ownership (TCO)

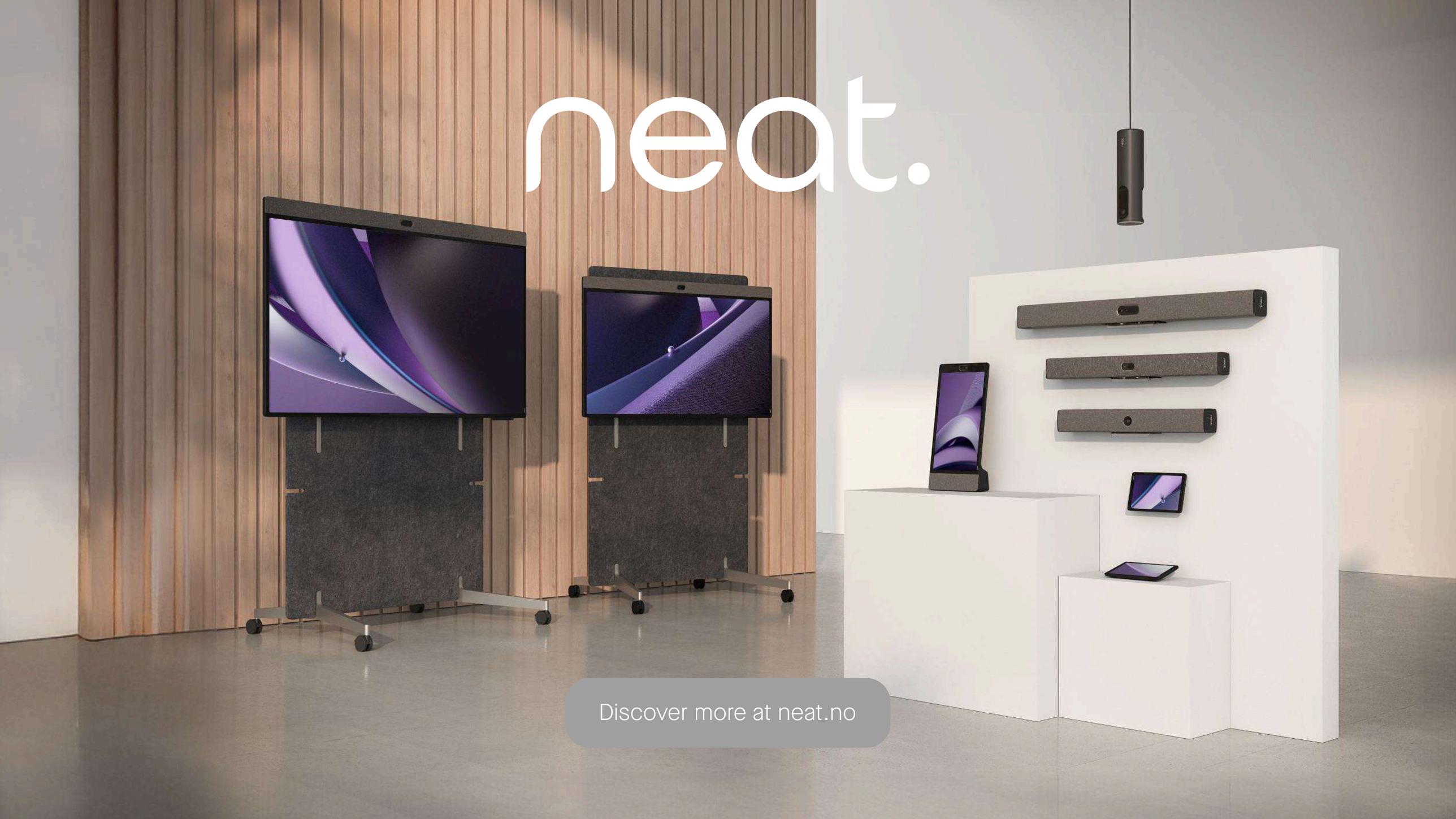
- ☐ How much time and labor does installing the devices and maintaining each room take?
- ☐ What subscriptions are required for updates and maintenance?
- ☐ Are support and troubleshooting handled by one or multiple vendors?

Time to act

Deploying video collaboration hardware across meeting spaces doesn't have to be complicated, so your choices matter upfront. As with most things in life and work, simplicity is often the key to getting things up and running fast, saving costs, and establishing lasting solutions that continually deliver well into the future.

If you've read through this guide and the checklist, you're ahead of the curve. You now know what to look for and have clarified what matters most—simplicity, reliability, flexibility, and long-term value. The next step is finding a solution that genuinely fulfills those expectations.

At Neat, we bring people together with beautifully simple video devices and experiences, enabling more natural, equitable, and engaging video meetings. Our pioneering portfolio provides superb audio and video quality for Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet (coming Q4 2025), or whatever video conferencing platform you choose via our BYOD solution. Designed to reduce complexity, scale across meeting spaces, provide flexibility and give your IT team complete control with minimal overhead, our solution lets you deploy smarter, provide support more easily, and adapt faster as your needs evolve while keeping your total cost of ownership low.


neat.
Discover more at neat.no