Case **Study**

Zoom

Businesses require effective collaboration, and the need for relevant and efficient tools continues to grow. Conferencing software platforms like Zoom have evolved to bring the virtual meeting experience to life, fulfilling communication needs accordingly. With additional features and a unique perspective on virtual meetings, Zoom has become a reliable conferencing option for many in business, from remote workers on their laptops to executive meetings in large corporate boardrooms.

As such a transformative solution in the industry, Zoom has partnered with integration companies like Profound Technologies to merge the software with all of the other technology in conference rooms. Profound's CTO, Brett Fisher, has been impressed with Zoom's platform and how it has impacted the meeting room experience for his customers: "A core objective of the Profound approach is to make conferencing easy. When we evaluated the various web and traditional video conferencing services for compatibility with our product suite, we decided that working with Zoom was the best way to achieve this goal."

Zoom's recent popularity for many companies is due to its virtual meeting rooms, a different and refreshing approach to the preceding conferencing platforms. "With Zoom, the meeting room always exists in the cloud, mimicking more of a real life experience," Brett explains. "Whoever enters the virtual meeting room is waiting for the meeting to begin by the host. No one needs to answer a call to join the meeting."

Traditional video conferencing systems have been fairly effective, but these older systems rely on point-to-point calls to connect the members of the meeting. This would present like a telephone conference call except with video because one end dials the other end. While this type of functionality was formerly necessary over the years, Zoom prepares businesses for the future of interactive conferencing. The future is virtual meeting rooms hosted in the Cloud.

> "By bringing Zoom on board, our customers are able to have both a meeting room and conferencing software that works seamlessly and provides them with an enjoyable end user experience."

Brett continues to describe the differences between traditional video conferencing options and Zoom: "Traditional video conferencing platforms are based on local infrastructure maintained by the IT departments to create the network traversal, hosting, bridging, contact lists, etc. Zoom differs because it approaches conferencing as a software company with a cloud service."

A major benefit of Zoom over previous methods is the decrease in cost. Brett explains: "Zoom doesn't require hardware costs, but instead reduces the expensive overhead of extra services required from IT Departments, Hardware Maintenance, Configuration, and Infrastructure. Zoom's only expense is a modest monthly fee for user accounts and Zoom Rooms."

Zoom also provides the ability to improve upon the traditional experience by leveraging more recent capabilities. Because it seeks to provide users with more awareness and control of the experience, Zoom has expanded on the basics with features such as contact presence status, multiple contact meeting invitations, active host transfer, and participant controls for mute, camera, and much more.

These additional features have set Zoom apart from its competition and it has continued to uncover new improvements for its platform. Brett explains one of its more recent innovations—the Zoom Phone: "This offering would replace the standard company phone system with a cloud based PBX by Zoom, which unifies the video and audio communications platforms under one application and service."

While many companies are eager to switch to Zoom's video conferencing and phone platforms, there are some who are concerned about moving away from the systems they have previously invested in and installed in their conference rooms. What about those who work with Cisco, Polycom, or Microsoft?

"Zoom makes the transition easy," Brett says reassuringly. "Your existing video conference unit may likely be 'cloud compatible' to Zoom's infrastructure, depending on the model. However, without fully switching over to Zoom, you may not have access to some of the useful features Zoom provides on its own solutions."

Either way, Zoom supports the ability to connect both Cisco and Skype for Business (Teams) conference system to its virtual meeting rooms. "In doing so, Zoom's virtual meeting room experience is available to those with different systems from other enterprise solutions providers."

Brett and his team at Profound Technologies are happy with how well Zoom integrates with their current platform. "By bringing Zoom on board, our customers are able to have both a meeting room and conferencing software that works seamlessly and provides them with an enjoyable end user experience. This solution reflects our company's goal and we are excited to continue in servicing our clients together."

Figure 1. Magic Quadrant for Meeting Solutions

Source: Gartner (September 2018)