

Title:

Video Conferencing: The Answer To Rising Fuel Costs

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557

Summary:

With spiraling fuel costs and security provisions making travel prohibitively expensive and unpleasant, video conferencing becomes an ever more attractive option

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Video Conferencing

Article Body:

When I was working for a large corporation some time ago, we installed one of the first video conferencing systems to cut down on the amount of travel. Turned out a lot of the staff saw business trips as a perk that let them go travel for a day or two even if it was just for a 30 minute meeting. Later, when I had my own small business, I tried to use video conferencing to communicate with partners and contributors, but again I saw that they did not want to give up traveling, staying at hotels, and doing some sight seeing while on their business trips.

That was then and this is now. Things have changed. I used to enjoy business travel myself and actually look forward to spending time in an airport or on a plane. But that was before airports became virtual fortresses where travelers are treated like criminals and there are dour-faced security folks who take the fun out of everything. And before flight attendants became grumpy dispensers of tiny bags of peanuts. And before hotels began charging a king's ransom for a night's stay. And, most of all, before run-away fuel prices that affect everything from driving a car to flying to taxi cabs to anything else that's requires energy to heat, cool, manufacture or use. Yes, the situation is getting pretty bad.

Fortunately, video conferencing can greatly ease the pain. The technology has evolved to a point where there's an audio or video conferencing solution for just about any need and any budget. Video conferencing has become enormously flexible, and it no longer requires a large capital investment as it did in the past when companies installed their own systems. These days there are video conferencing service providers that can handle anything from instant strategy

meetings to information and training sessions, and all the way to large-scale multi-national events.

How does it all work? You find one of the leading videoconferencing service providers, set up an account via an online application, select whatever conferencing options you need, and then invite your conference participants. Stay away from conferencing providers that try to lock you in with long-term contracts like the phone companies do. You should be able to come and go as you please!

What kind of equipment do you need? That depends on the kind of conference, but in general any modern computer with a high-speed Internet connection can handle video conferencing. If your conference takes place in a boardroom or some other larger venue, you may want to use large flat screens or projectors for maximum impact. Video conferencing service providers can help you determine equipment needs.

An additional benefit of today's video conferencing offerings is that they are highly adaptable and customizable for numerous types of applications. Training sessions may combine one-way video conferencing with PowerPoint presentation playback, whiteboarding, the ability to call in with questions, instant messaging between participants, and more. Sessions can also be saved so that they can later be accessed by those who may have missed the live conference. There are also industry-specific conferencing solutions that may include document sharing, private chat, desktop sharing, special privacy provisions, or whatever other requirements there may be.

With travel becoming ever more expensive and video conferencing technology ever better, more sophisticated and more affordable, using it is a no-brainer.