

## Top Five Cost Benefits of Virtual Collaboration Solutions

Industries around the globe are discovering the convenience and cost-savings of today's revolutionary **group collaboration solutions**. These sophisticated virtual communications tools are increasingly available as COTS products and present a tremendous opportunity to competitive organizations wishing to operate more effectively and efficiently. The solutions available range from simple **Chat** and **Instant Messenger** applications to customized software suites with futuristic security features.

Virtual collaboration solutions bring users together across time zones to share information often instantaneously, rendering geographical obstacles irrelevant. However, they offer varying degrees of security and effectiveness, making a close comparison before purchase essential to an informed selection. The few proven solutions with a history of longevity and a loyal client base offer a tremendous potential Return on Investment (ROI) for the organization.

**Ezenia's InfoWorkSpace (IWS)** is one such product. Adopted by the Department of Defense (DoD) in 1998, IWS quickly emerged as a vital collaboration solution for the Federal, Defense & Intelligence and Government sectors. IWS is a complete application suite created from common roots and built to run on the most secure and time-sensitive networks in the world. Now being released to the Commercial sector, IWS is providing enterprise businesses with the opportunity for access to technology that has previously been available only to the Federal sector.

Here are five ways virtual collaboration solutions can produce **measurable ROI**:

1. Faster information sharing, decision-making and problem solving
2. Teleworking benefits – increased productivity and reduced operating costs
3. Reduced travel costs
4. Increased productivity through enhanced presence
5. Time-savings through secure and searchable archiving

### **Faster information sharing, decision-making and problem solving**

Virtual workspace solutions allow geographically dispersed employees to instantly communicate using sophisticated voice, video and data technologies. This ability to share information through document management and white boarding functionality across time-zones and around the globe improves productivity and facilitates problem-solving. In some sectors, sophisticated versions of **Instant Messenger (IM)** and **Secure Chat** applications have evolved to replace email as an even faster and more efficient

means of sharing information. Add one of today's widely-available webcams to the mix and users can hold a "face-to-face" meeting completely virtually!

IWS also offers inherent time-saving features. For example, it is a **complete application suite** developed from common origins, eliminating the need for toggling between multiple components. Its geographically **intuitive Graphic User Interface (GUI)** is user-friendly and easily adopted without extensive need for training. Lastly, IWS's extensive **auditability and traceability** capabilities provide invaluable opportunities for time-savings, as all user exchanges are preserved in fully searchable archives for future reference.

## Teleworking benefits

### Increased productivity

Representative Frank Wolf (R, VA) has long been an avid proponent for teleworking and has introduced several bills to provide tax cuts for organizations with a teleworking program. According to his website, teleworking offers the following **cost benefits** to employers:

- increased productivity
- reduced overhead and occupation costs
- lower absenteeism rates
- increased efficiency through advanced technology (such as IWS)
- potential tax breaks

According to *PC World*, as quoted by the Telework Coalition, office space for the average worker costs \$10,000 per year. Teleworking can cut corporate real estate costs from 25-90% per year.<sup>1</sup> The Telework Coalition reports stunning statistics from two major corporations: DOW Chemical says administrative costs have dropped 15% annually and productivity is up 32.5% since they began employing teleworking. American Express reports that their teleworkers produce 43% more work than their office counterparts!<sup>2</sup>

WorldatWork's "Telework Trendlines" survey report states that more than 28 million Americans already telework at least once a week and their research suggests 100 million will be teleworking by the year 2010.<sup>3</sup> Using virtual collaboration solutions such as Ezenia's IWS to replace and/or improve the office experience will not only **increase**

*"Work is something you do, not someplace you go. There is nothing magical about strapping ourselves into a car, driving to a building, just to sit in front of a computer."*

Rep Frank Wolf

<sup>1</sup> PC World <http://www.PCWorld.com> -<http://www.telcoa.org/id33.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> The Telework Coalition <http://www.TeleworkCoalition.com> - <http://www.telcoa.org/id33.htm>

<sup>3</sup> WorldatWork <http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/home/html/home/jsp> - <http://209.85.215.104/search?&q=cache:C7s4:BKWGqEJ:www.worldatwork.org/waw/pub/FiveWaystoManageWhatYouCantSee.doc+Telework+Trendlines+Survey+report&hl=en&&ct=clnk&cd=4&gl=us>

**profits** and employee job satisfaction, but make a healthy and positive impact on the local environment.

### **Reduced operating costs**

IWS's **built-in VoIP** tool provides significant cost savings as there is no need for a phone conferencing service for voice exchanges. In addition, Ezenia's server employs **concurrent user licensing**, rather than virtual office licensing, as most competitors do. This means that a company purchases a set amount of "seats" or accounts, which may then be shared by whoever in the company is granted access to one at any given time. This has proven to be a less expensive and easier plan than the traditional method of purchasing assigned or named accounts which may only be used by that person and thus requires the purchase of many more accounts to serve the company's population.

*According to a 2008 survey by ICU Global, **environmentally responsible initiatives** are responsible in part for the growing demand for virtual collaboration solutions. The more travel can be replaced with the virtual experience, the more paper can be replaced with virtual files, the less carbon footprint a company leaves on its environment.*

### **Reduced travel costs**

Business travel may be an enterprise's largest single expenditure when combined with its tangent necessities. Rising fuel costs and unreliable air travel are becoming increasingly cost-prohibitive as a business expense. Add to that the costs of hotel accommodations, rental car, meal allowance, shipping costs for meeting documents, etc. - these travel costs start significantly impacting one's profit margin.

In addition to these cost savings achieved through eliminating travel needs, virtual collaboration solutions allow employees to maintain consistent productivity, avoiding the inevitable pileup of work that accumulates while out of the office. In short, virtual collaboration solutions **minimize lost work time**.

### **Increased productivity through enhanced presence (self-cloning)**

Most of today's collaboration solutions offer some aspect of presence capability, but the quality and extent of presence varies widely. Presence is a highly desirable and effective cost-cutter, as it grants users a kind of "virtual omniscience" across an organization. The most comprehensive presence applications provide the most robust perspective and therefore reflect the most potential cost savings.

Ezenia's IWS is unique in that its presence capabilities reflect "multidimensional scalability." This means that:

- Users can see all other users at all other times, whether they are online, offline, or in various intermediary states. No more tedious games of voicemail tag to find out whether personnel are available or not.

- Users can essentially “self-clone,” meaning they can participate in up to 24 virtual meetings simultaneously. This results in outstanding scheduling and productivity efficiencies.
- Users have the option to schedule private meetings, rendering them invisible to other users and providing an extra level of internal security.

In short, this extensive presence capability gives users access to the ultimate in multi-tasking, resulting in dramatically increased productivity. In addition, all users know who is present and where they are located, providing **accountability** at multiple levels.

## **Time-savings through secure and searchable archiving**

Without strong security features, any virtual collaboration solution is of little value. An organization needs security features that maintain privacy during and after meeting interaction, yet security capabilities vary from provider to provider, with some having time and quantity limits and even security flaws. Some are not compliant with levels that would allow them to work with government agencies.

IWS's global presence originates in its adoption by the Department of Defense (DoD) in 1998, where it quickly emerged as a vital solution for logistics, command and control, and numerous administrative wartime needs. As a result, IWS runs on some of the world's most time-sensitive and security-critical networks.

In addition to these high-level security certifications, IWS administrators can dictate **multiple granular levels of security** within IWS. This is achieved both through the use of geographical “privacy” –users can lock a meeting room's “door” or even render their location “invisible.” IWS also employs highly sophisticated encryption, passwords, and user qualification profiles to achieve the highest levels of internal security.

This extensive internal and external security has the incredibly beneficial effect of an increased user willingness to share information – a cultural change which can have tremendous impact upon an organization. The DoD and FBI – organizations which traditionally require the highest levels of security – have chosen IWS as their primary virtual collaboration tool – **proof of IWS's reliability** in this respect.

Furthermore, IWS offers the additional benefit of keeping all data files **completely auditable and traceable** – all text and white boarding interactions are preserved and archived for future reference. In the event of a security breach, for example from a disgruntled employee, all recent visitors and their participation are recorded. These files are also kept in storage until willfully deleted, or a timed-out feature may be chosen.

## **Conclusion**

Virtual collaboration solutions provide a tremendous opportunity for organizations looking to streamline their communications and operations. Today's sophisticated

solutions can provide real and measureable ROI through increased productivity, enhanced decision making and problem solving. In addition, organizations can enjoy reduced business travel expenses and operational expenses. Lastly, products with a strong track record and reliable security features can facilitate successful teleworking, an increasingly popular practice reflecting extensive documented savings.

Ezenia is a pioneer of the virtual collaboration solutions world, proven by IWS's extensive history as the solution of choice for the Federal sector. IWS helps maximize efficiency and effectiveness while maintaining the highest levels of security and usability. The effect of this synergy is a superior product that produces measurable ROI for our customers.

To learn more about how you can take advantage of IWS [Contact Us](#) or [View Our Demo](#).