

HOW TO PLAN A HUDDLE ROOM

Survey data and analysis offers answers to all your critical huddle room planning questions.

INSIDE:

- ▶ Discover who needs huddle rooms and why
- ▶ What benefits huddle rooms provide
- ▶ How to ensure successful huddle room implementation
- ▶ Critical factors to consider when planning a huddle room
- ▶ Essential components for huddle rooms
- ▶ Creating future-compatible huddle rooms

Checklist: Determine If You Need a Huddle Room and Why

A simple checklist of questions will determine if an organization would benefit from adoption of huddle rooms. Several KPIs can validate the decision.



In 1992, author John Gray released a book that had the world talking. He addressed a topic that involved two groups of people struggling to relate to the same concept. That book was called “Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex.” In it, Gray argued that men and women, despite both being human beings, had very different views and appeared to be from different planets.

Three decades later, the professional workforce is dealing with a similar situation, driven by differences between millennials and generation Xers (you can include Boomers to a lesser extent as well) and how they work, meet and tackle business in the workplace. One of the core topics of separation between the two would be the use of huddle rooms.

Millennials thrive in them and consider them a necessary part of driving their daily successes at work, whereas other generations and companies haven’t fully embraced the importance of these spaces. It’s critical to gain a better understanding of millennial behavior and to embrace new, innovative ways of approaching business — one of the biggest of which is the huddle room.

Our recent survey of corporate end users indicates that close to 40 percent of respondents added at least one huddle space recently. Of that group, only about one quarter of them added just one huddle room. The significance of this study shows the pervasive adoption of the huddle space, showing more and more employees are demanding the work environments it supports.

Millennial workers and their expectations for quick conferencing solutions are a driver of huddle room adoption.

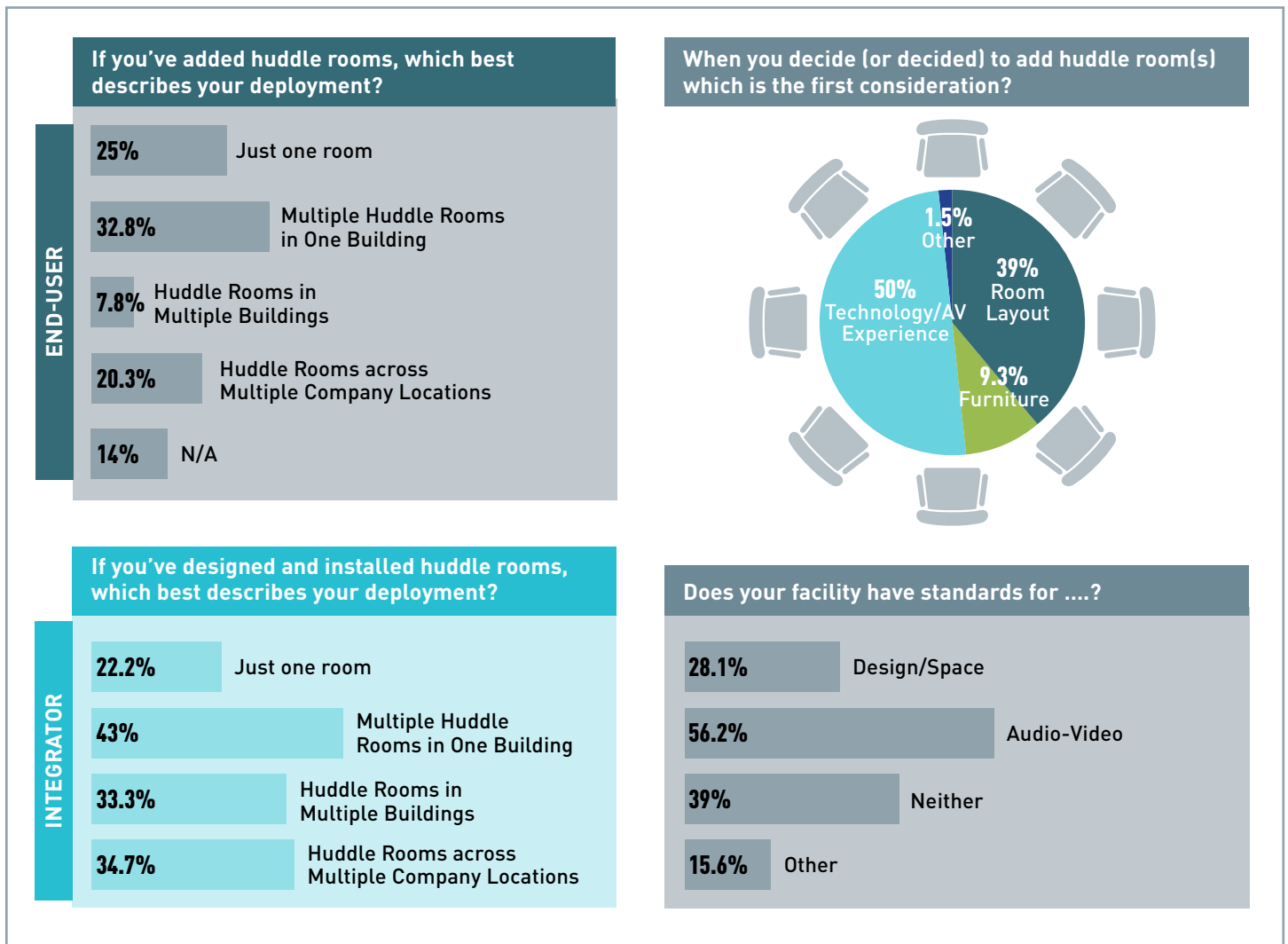
What Is a Huddle Room?

Generally speaking, a huddle room is a smaller meeting space that features collaborative technology like videoconferencing and connectivity. They are designed for free-flowing expression of ideas as well as impromptu meetings where colleagues can get together and quickly meet (sometimes for only a few minutes to review an idea). Other times, it's for more robust videoconferencing sessions.

This concept is different from the more "traditional" approach that workers 40 years old and older are used to in which a company provides a single meeting space, typically larger in scale, that hosts structured and often more formal meetings that last at least an hour.

Let's look at what drives huddle spaces, who uses them and when it's time to jump in:

Millennials — You cannot speak about the huddle room without talking about the millennial generation, a group that will occupy over 50 percent of the work force in just a few years. Millennials tend to walk into their first day of work with at least one, if not two, videoconferencing devices — their cell phones and tablets. Granted, many in the pro AV

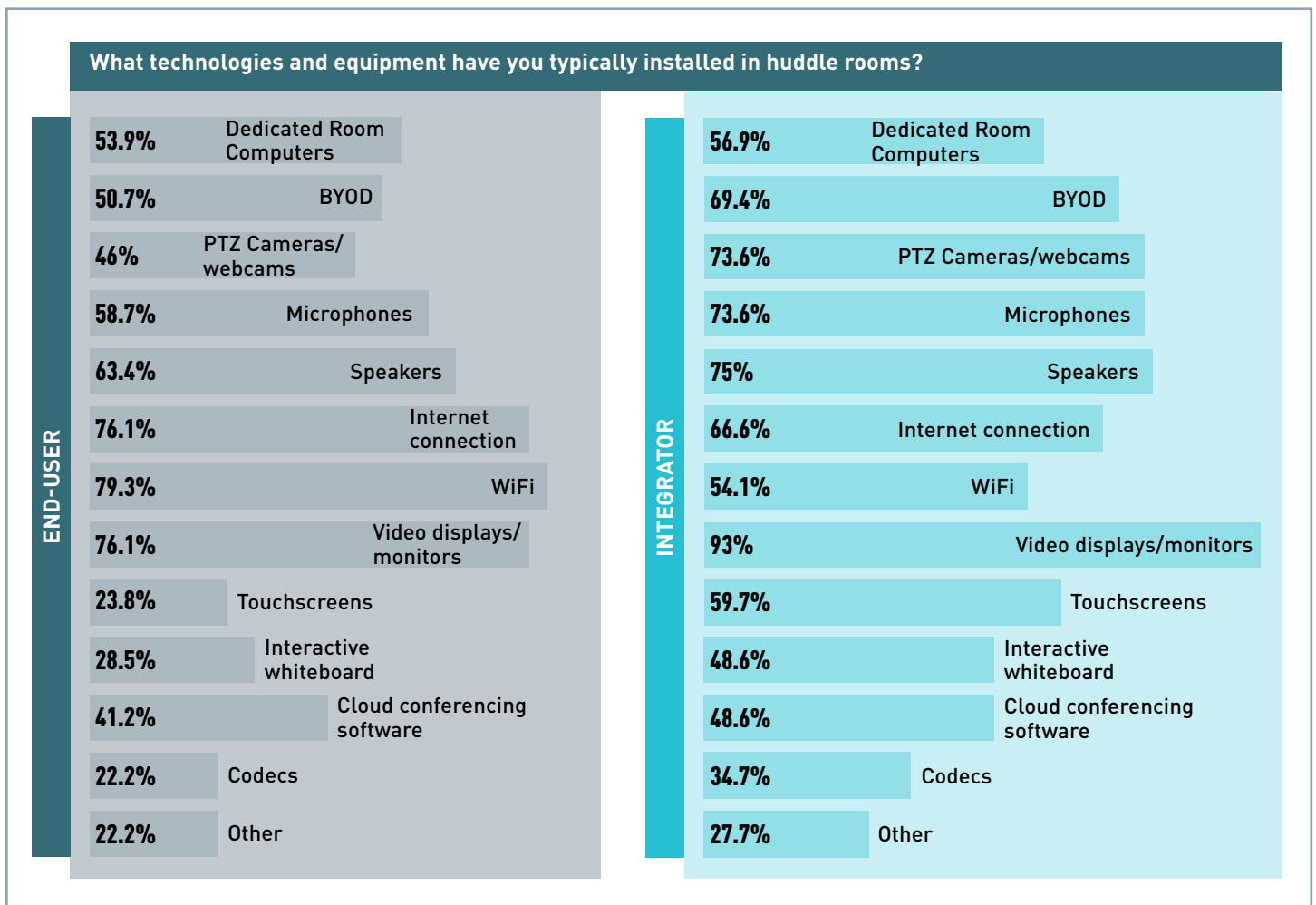


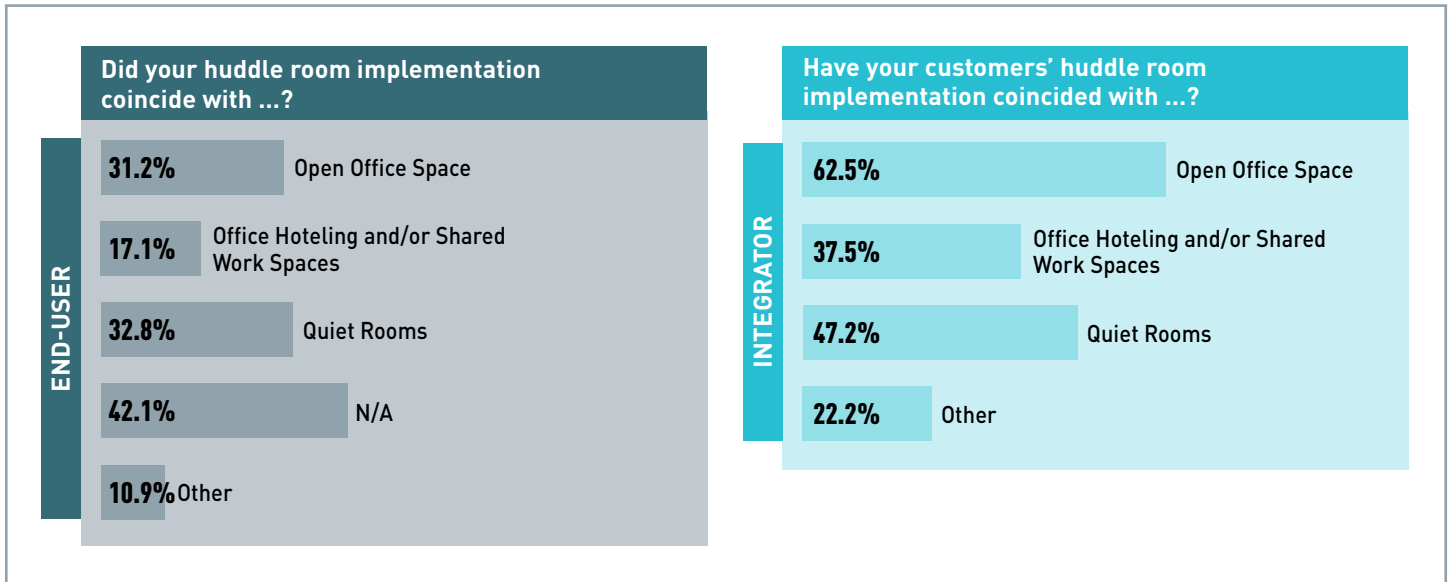
community and basically anyone over 40 might disagree with the concept of cell phones and tablets being categorized as videoconferencing devices, but make no mistake: they're in the minority. This creates a technology expectation corporations need to manage. It also creates overwhelming security issues that need to be addressed.

It's also noteworthy that in general, millennials don't mind having their pictures being taken ("selfies," anyone?) and embrace communicating using video in their social lives. It's only natural they demand this in the workplace. Conversely, the average person over 40 would prefer not to use video chat in favor of a phone call. Where a 45-year-old does not put a premium on videoconferencing based on a lack of comfort, a millennial demands it based on communication patterns.

With the videoconferencing example in mind, it's a safe leap of faith to say the millennial generation is very tech-savvy. They want to interact with technology. They want to be exposed to more of it. That's in contrast to gen-Xers, for the most part.

Collaborative Culture – Millennial workers are incredibly social and collaborative. Don't let the IMing, right-swiping, thumbs-up'ing behaviors fool you. This is a group that is very interwoven; it's just that they communicate in a different way. They have been raised in a





world that delivers immediate feedback. How many “likes” or “shares” they get has just as much value (if not more) than a Gen Xer’s corporate title or number of actual friends they have. So what does this mean and what does it mean for a huddle space?

A millennial also brings to the workplace a need for instant recognition and approval for the work and ideas they create. Huddle rooms serve that need well, providing an informal space where a worker can gather colleagues to express ideas and collaborate on them quickly. This may happen multiple times throughout the day in a more informal, free-flowing manner. This behavior is not something a single meeting room that needs to be reserved can handle.

Corporate Adopters of the Huddle Space

What began in technology-focused companies in Silicon Valley has spread across the country. It is estimated that there are over 50 million huddle spaces in place today, according to Wainhouse 2017 research report, and that number is set to nearly double in the next five years, according to a Knoll workplace executive survey. While 10 years ago, the corporate profile for this form of meeting space shared similar characteristics, that cannot be said today. From the start-up to top financial companies, huddle spaces are being embraced and significant corporate investments are being made to build them. Today’s profile of a huddle space user is less about the vertical industry and more about the average age of the employees. At the end of the day, every industry and every size company is using huddle spaces.

When is it Time to Invest in Huddle Spaces?

Here is a simple checklist you can use to help determine whether the huddle space conversation needs to be moved from something that would be “nice to have” to something businesses “need to have.”

For how many of the following would you check “yes”?

- ▶ Are you looking to attract younger talent that places value on collaborative capabilities?
- ▶ Is your company becoming more decentralized, adding to the remote worker population

Millennials don’t mind having their pictures being taken (“selfies” anyone?) and embrace communicating using video in their social lives. It’s only natural they demand this in the workplace.

and creating a greater daily need for videoconferencing?

- ▶ Have you or are you moving to an open floor plan where more private breakout meeting spaces need to be provided?
- ▶ Will your company be replacing laptops with more cost-effective tablets while moving local files to the cloud for enhanced content sharing?
- ▶ Are millennials more than 50 percent of your corporate population?

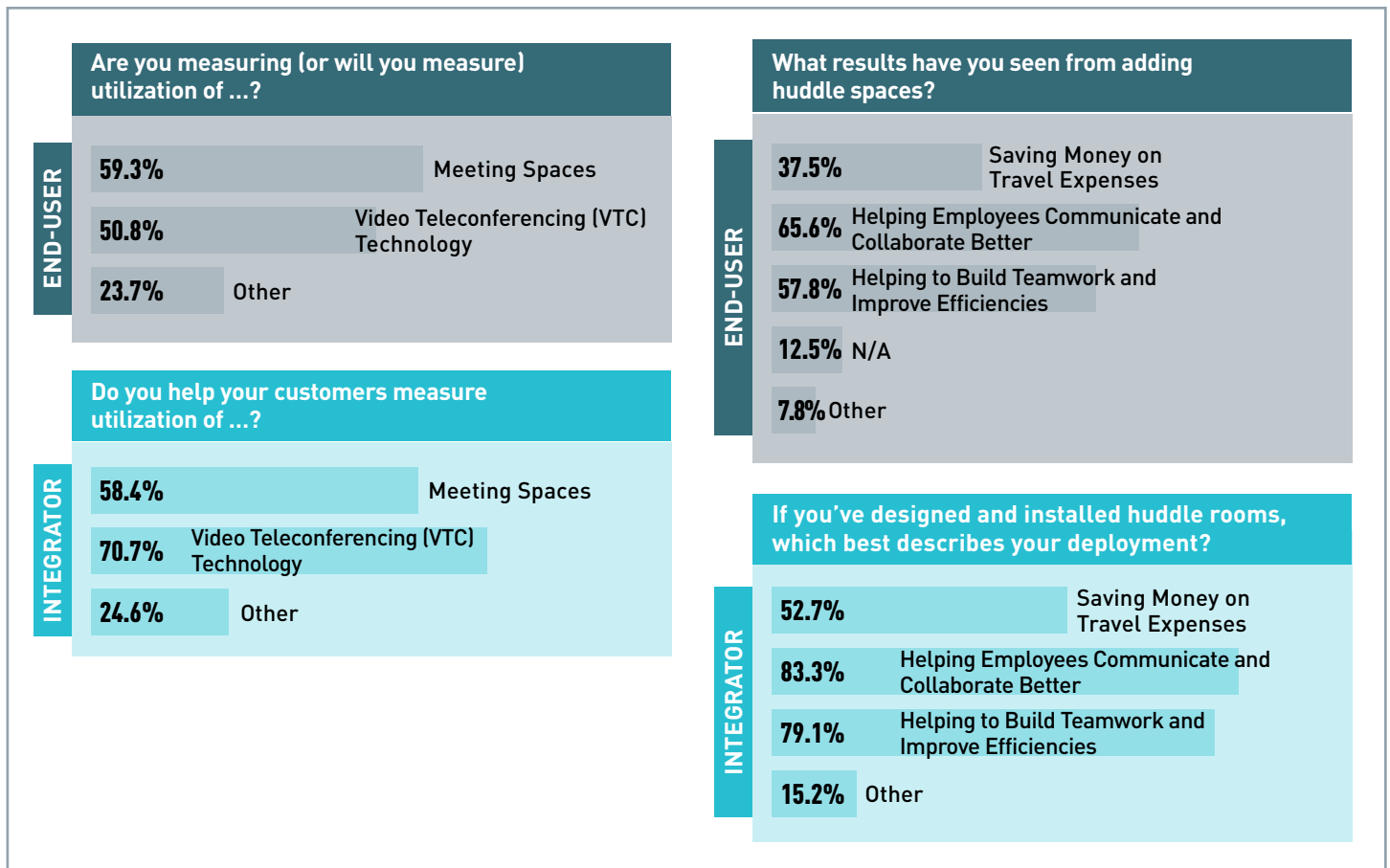
If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, it’s worth looking into adopting huddle spaces.

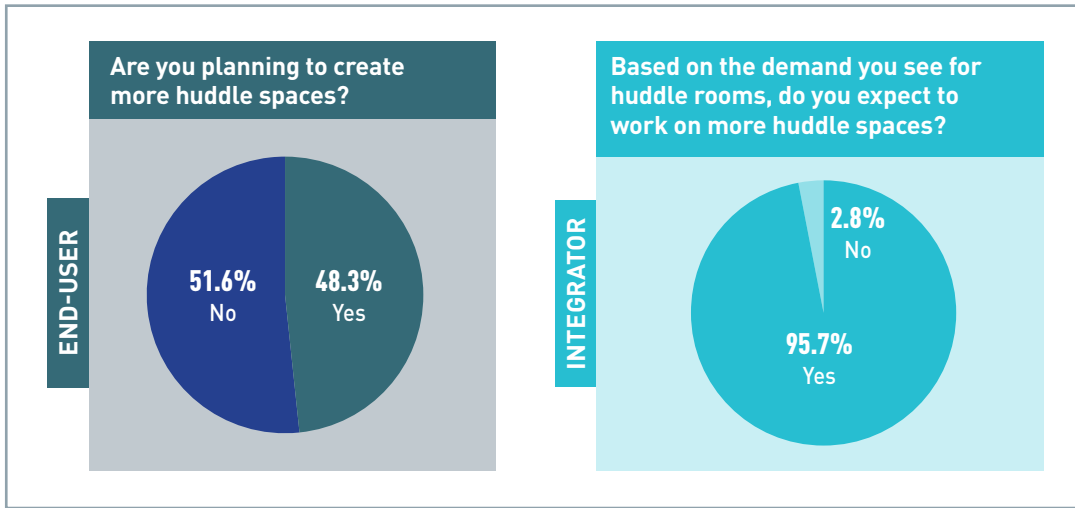
Measuring the Success of Huddle Spaces

Once you have invested in huddle spaces, how do you know if it was worthwhile? Like many return on investment (ROI) models, soft dollars need to be considered when assessing value. Our recent survey found that a majority of responders defined success in three major categories:

- ▶ Helping other employees – 65%
- ▶ Building teamwork and improved efficiencies – 59%
- ▶ Saving money on travel – 38%

There are other key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be used to determine a huddle space’s success. Room up-time is one of the most important aspects.



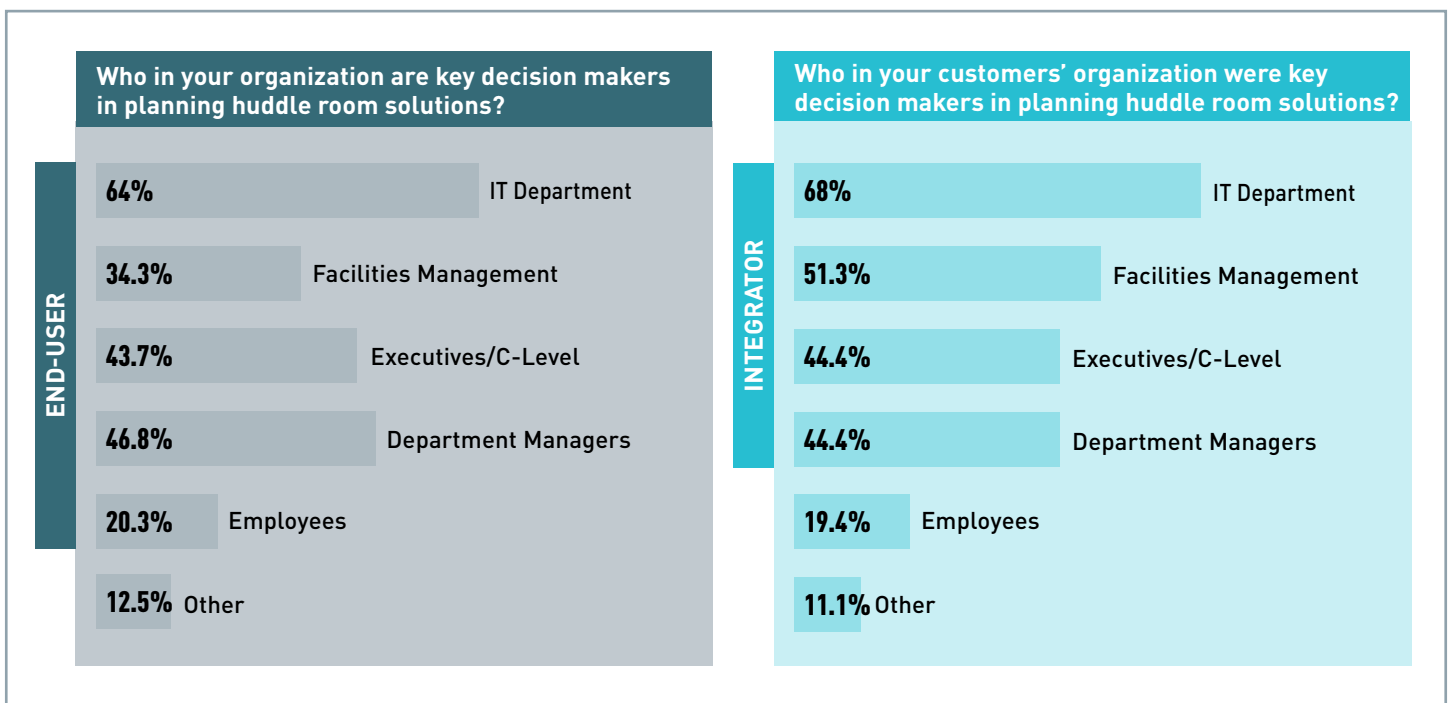


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The simplicity of a huddle room lends itself to being all about connecting and meeting fast. A good huddle room eliminates downtime, because connecting is easy and quick.

Another important KPI is the actual room usage. How many hours a day/week is the space being used? A major trend in the early 2000s saw companies building spaces and buying technology that did not get used. Today's data analytic systems will tell you exactly how often a space is being used and how often.

A space that is used generates an output that drives profitability for the corporation. There is no doubt that the huddle room seems like Venus if you've been brought up on Mars. In reality, the two worlds are much closer than you think. People of all generations



are using BYOD for social reasons and using consumer-based videoconferencing to connect with friends and family. Our core differences are really not as different as we make them out to be.

Huddle rooms promote collaboration, enable free-flowing ideas, connect people and save corporations money while attracting top talent. Most organizations would certainly embrace this value proposition. ■

Data Tells the Story

We surveyed 204 technology decision makers at organizations and 167 technology system integrators to acquire the data presented in this analysis.

5 Reasons Why Huddle Rooms Are In Demand

Open floor plans, need for private meetings, millennial employees' expectations are all drivers for organizations adopting huddle spaces.



Today's corporate leaders understand if they're not already embracing huddle rooms in their offices, they're at least worthy of consideration.

The first step in considering whether huddle rooms are right for a particular organization starts with several basic questions. In order to help corporate technology decision-makers better understand the impact that huddle spaces can have on their workflows, it's important to address some critical questions and issues.

This article offers a deeper look at the top five reasons why organizations choose huddle rooms. First, however, let's get on the same page in terms of what a huddle space is and what it offers.

What Is a Huddle Space?

One of the most exciting aspects of today's marketplace is that a huddle space can be almost anything you need it to be. A huddle space is any place where people can congregate to interact, communicate, review content, present or collaborate. They are designed for smaller, informal, quick meetings either in an open area or in an enclosed room that seats two to six people. These spaces are typically dense with technology to allow quick, seamless communication and collaboration.

Are Huddle Spaces Sustainable ... or a Trend?

Like any industry, trends come and go. The meeting spaces we support are no different.

In open office spaces, huddle spaces provide an oasis for collaborating on projects.

One of the biggest “trends” we’ve seen recently is the advent of the huddle space — a space that originally began as a small space with a limited investment for millennials but now has become a space that has evolved into one of the most dynamic and important aspects of the business day. A huddle room has become a space that now sees more advanced collaborative features, videoconferencing and other critical meeting functions. About 50 percent of surveyed customers say they’re planning on adding more huddle rooms to their organizations. In short, the huddle space is something that will transcend any trends and is likely here to stay.

With a general handle on the huddle space and its longevity, let’s dive deeper into the key driving factors why huddle spaces are so popular:

1. Dependence on Videoconferencing

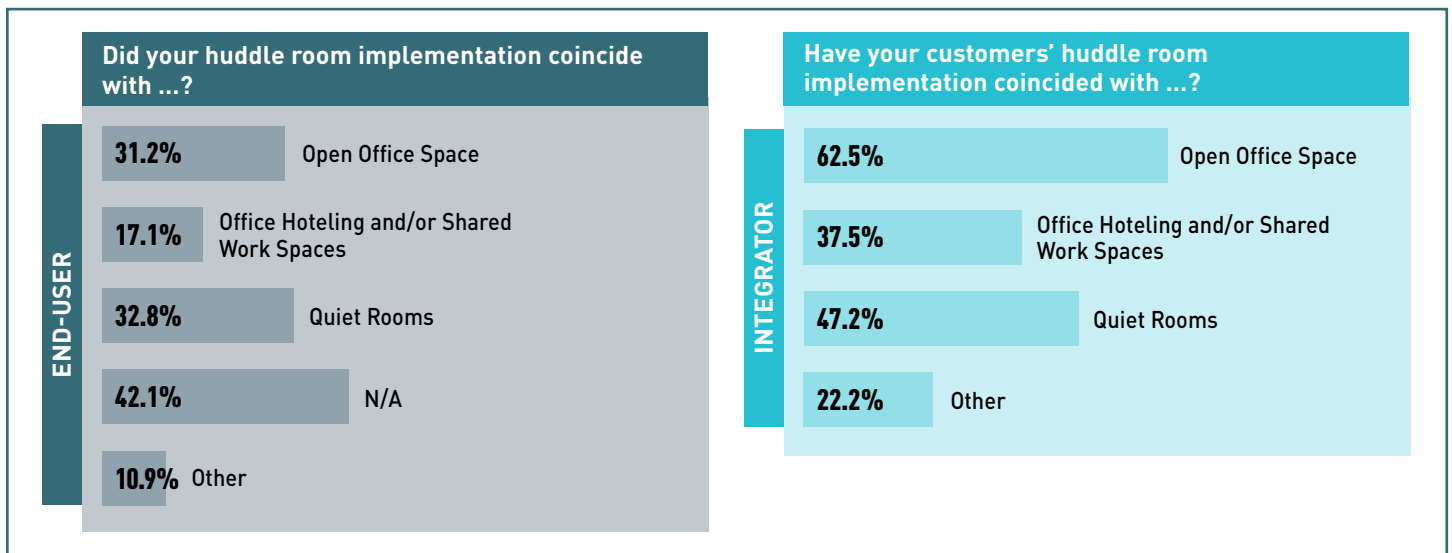
Everbridge Research has reported that by 2020, 72 percent of the U.S. workforce will be working remotely. On the other side of this dramatic number is the obvious growing dependence for videoconferencing to connect and integrate the workforce. There was certainly a time when a single videoconference system in the big conference room might have been sufficient. However, remote workers and advancements in VoIP have created a need for multiple, smaller conference spaces.

Based on a recent survey sent exclusively to end-users (or corporations) in which respondents were asked what technologies and equipment they have typically installed in huddle spaces, both PTZ cameras and cloud conferencing services dominated the responses. This is a clear illustration that building an infrastructure to facilitate conferencing and conferencing-on-demand is a top priority. And, unlike the past when we had that single room and single system, today’s office needs to facilitate multiple meetings simultaneously and throughout the day.

2. Open Floor Plans

Today’s offices are becoming increasingly dominated by open floor plans. What began in the tech sector has now been embraced by virtually every vertical. And the reason why is simple: the open floor plan allows for cost reductions and fosters collaboration as well as

The huddle space provides an oasis for collaborating on projects, conferencing or one-on-one meetings.



flexibility in terms of how you can use and manage the space itself. The next question is, “How does the open floor plan fuel the need for huddle spaces?”

A side effect of the open floor plan and the enhanced office collaboration is a louder working environment, an environment where it is difficult to maintain a more focused or private meeting. The huddle space provides an oasis for collaborating on projects, conferencing or one-on-one meetings where you can close the door and manage noise levels and privacy. The huddle space is a necessary investment for any company with an open floor plan that also depends on meetings as part of its typical business day.

3. A Millennial’s Social Profile / Collaboration

CNN has reported that within the next few years, millennials will occupy more than 50 percent of the workforce. Their behaviors and habits have shaped how business is done and, more importantly, how meetings are conducted. The generation’s habits are influenced by the fact they grew up with social media, immediate response times, file sharing, video on demand and an app on their mobile device that enables them to creatively interact with content. These behaviors and expectations came with them on their first days in the office and offices have been playing catch-up ever since.

The huddle space is the ideal environment for ad-hoc meetings where two colleagues can spontaneously jump into a room, review content, make comments and offer opinions. The nature of these spaces allow for a free flow of expression and thought as colleagues collaborate in multiple forms. Where a “traditional” conference room may be intimidating or need to be scheduled in advance, a huddle space provides an area that is conducive to social and collaborative behaviors.

4. Cost Efficiencies

The huddle space by nature has been designed to be a lower-cost meeting space than “traditional” meeting rooms. Because the physical space is smaller, you generally don’t need a display larger than 42 inches. The smaller number of occupants reduces the demand for more complex switchers. Cloud videoconferencing costs are very affordable and, finally, there is generally no need for a control system in the space. Excluding investments in décor, corporations can increase productivity, maximize technology and drive collaboration with a relatively small capital investment in technology for the huddle space.

5. Increased Flexibility and Productivity

A driving factor for investing in the huddle space is to encourage collaboration and help employees work faster and more efficiently. The marriage of real-time collaboration, instant communication with any employee regardless of location on business-critical content and a social environment results in a setup where employees feel empowered and motivated to work hard. The huddle space produces incredible ROI with its welcoming designs and technology integration, allowing for faster and more productive meetings.

Huddle spaces are redefining the way organizations collaborate, both internally and externally. The consideration of huddle spaces is to welcome the opportunity for enhanced collaborative business functions. The huddle space nurtures creative ideas, innovation, communication and productivity. ■

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4 Steps to Ensure Successful Huddle Room Implementation

Starting with a clear ROI goal and exploring true collaboration needs are both productive steps toward planning and implementing huddle rooms.



Huddle rooms are more than just a meeting space, and can have a meaningful impact on people and productivity. The huddle room is a hub for collaboration, a center point for meeting and a space today's employees value and demand. So with all that riding on this space, it's vital to have a plan for successful implementation of these spaces.

But how?

How does a company achieve success when adopting a collaborative huddle room? The answer is surprisingly not as complex as you may think. Let's explore the path to a successful collaborative experience within the space.

Arguably, the most important aspect of the huddle room is its ability to facilitate collaboration. But ...

- ▶ What do we mean by collaborate?
- ▶ How do you collaborate?
- ▶ What does it take to collaborate?

These are all questions organizations should consider. The answer to each question is as different to each company as we are to each other.

Like most purchasing decisions, it's important to determine why your organization needs a huddle room and how it will benefit workflow.

So you must simplify the process by detailing four criteria:

1. What are you looking to do with the huddle space? Why did you build it?
2. What is the correct collaboration technology for your organization?
3. How do you ensure adoption for the technology investment?
4. How will you measure success?

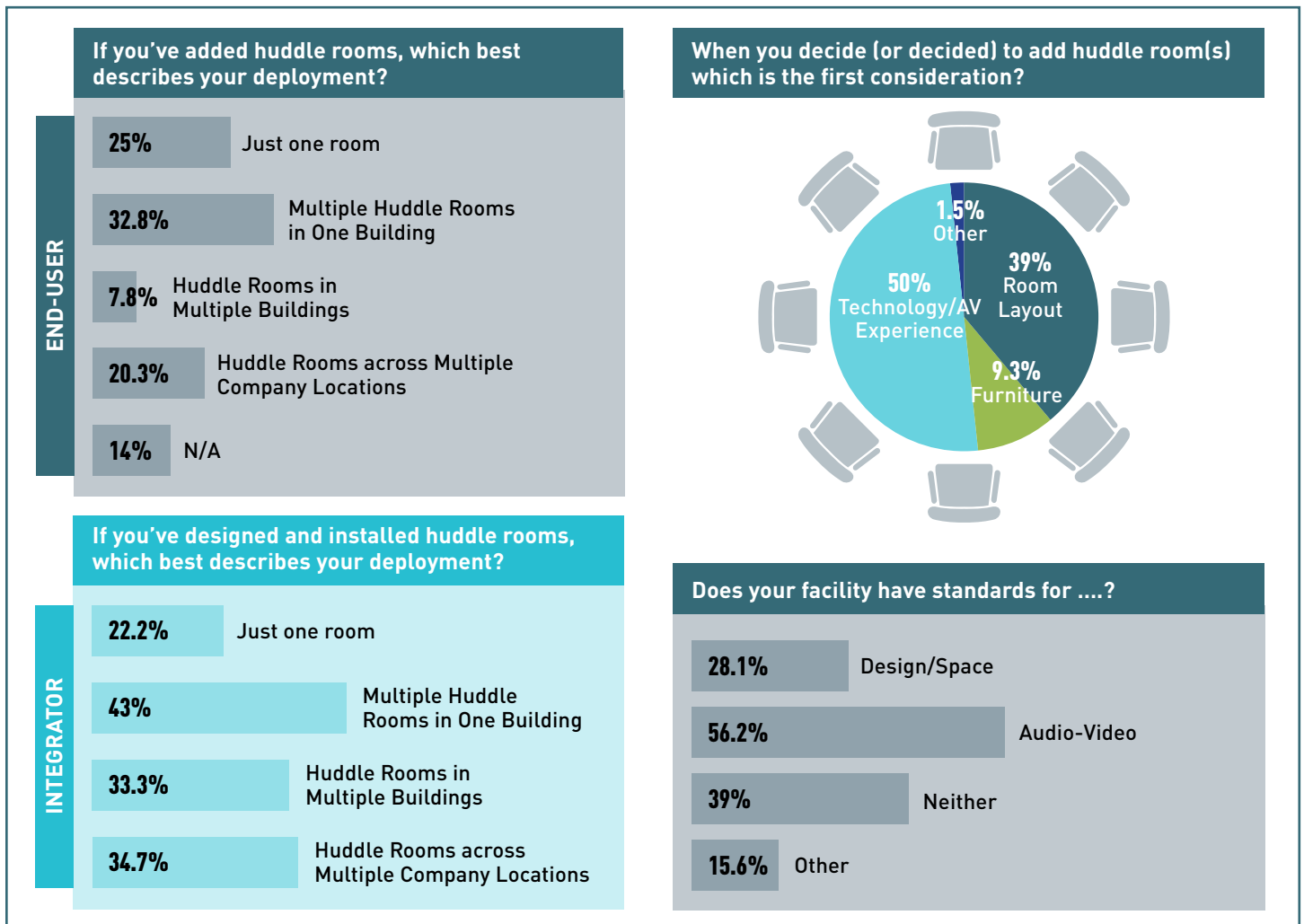
By tackling each of these points, you'll be on your way to ensuring the success of a huddle room implementation.

What are you looking to do with the huddle space? Why did you build it?

We know that each organization has specialized needs. As such, gone are the days of “all things to everyone” solutions. So begin the process by self-auditing. Begin to unpack and examine your employee profiles.

- ▶ Do you have remote employees and/or offices?
- ▶ Do your employees collaborate directly with clients/vendors on projects?
- ▶ What is the average meeting size in terms of number of people?

This will begin to unlock the keys to success because the answers begin to define not only if your employees collaborate, but how.



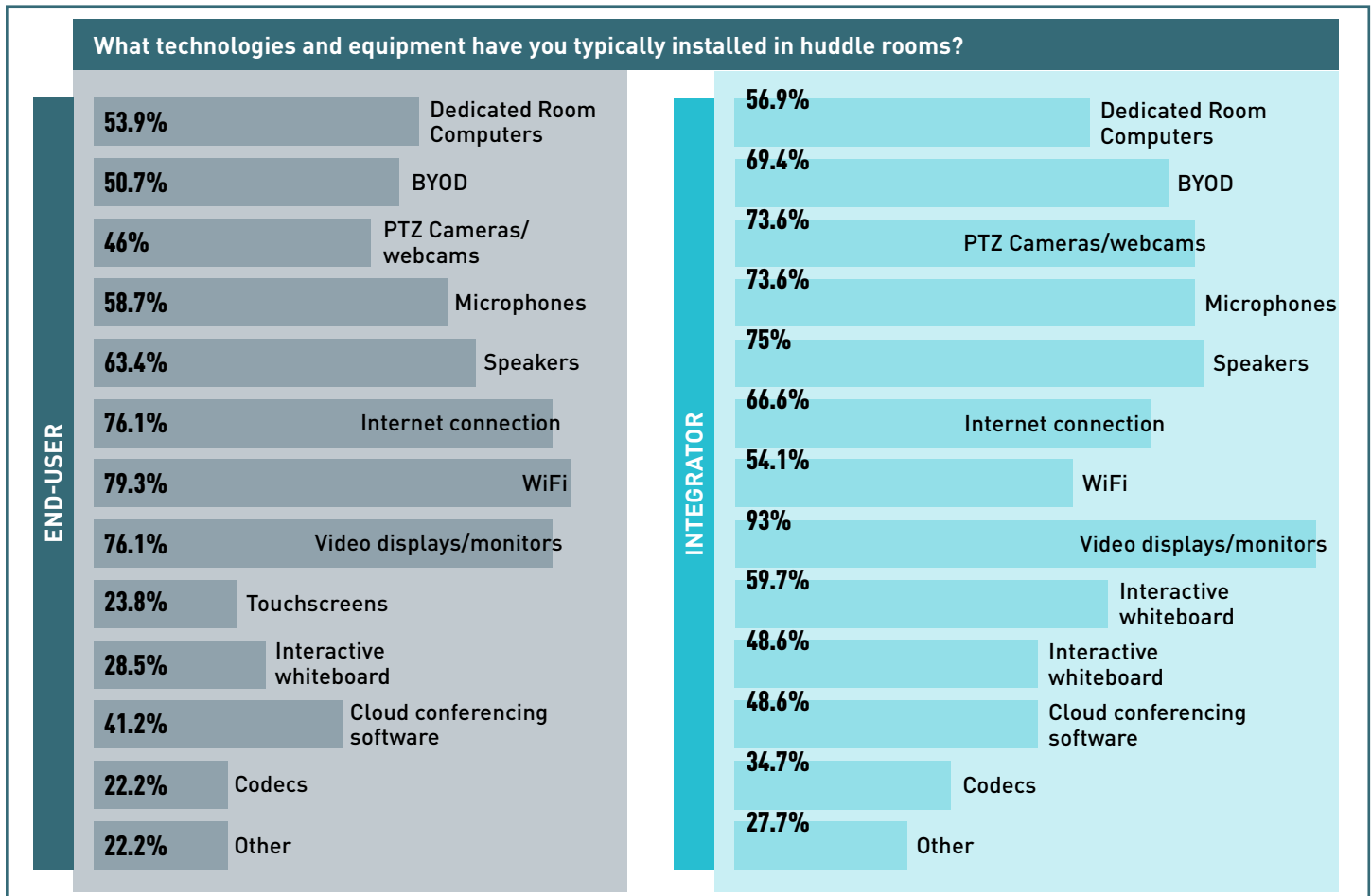
By evaluating remote office usage, number of traveling employees, diverse customer/ vendor footprints, you come to understand the need for some form of videoconferencing. Concluding that you have a profile that looks like this now means you need to identify a conferencing system, a camera, furniture, proper lighting and a display that can clearly show the people on the other end.

Once that is defined, you are now ready to take the next step in the process. What to buy?

What is the correct collaboration technology for your company?

This is a very robust topic that has many variables to consider. One of the biggest factors in defining today’s huddle space is what type of codec to rely on. You will need to determine if investing hardware-based solutions or the utilization of software allowing for employee devices such as laptops or any BYOD as the collaborative technology is best. These answers come from looking at a few factors:

- ▶ How important is image and audio clarity?
- ▶ How important is it for remote participants to be able to follow along?
- ▶ Network security – can the employee mobile devices all join the network? Is there content being discussed that can be permitted off the network?
- ▶ What is the scope of view for the meeting? Is it one-on-one, where a smaller camera is good enough, or do you need a camera to capture the entire room and/or have advanced features like pan-tilt-zoom or tracking?



- ▶ Wiring – what is the resolution and physical output of the camera and how close is it to the receiver? Will USB or HDMI limitations affect installation?
- ▶ Do you want to link huddle spaces to each other? Interconnected huddle rooms make sense for some organizations that are in campus settings or occupy multiple floors of a high-rise building.

Of these questions, the one that is most often overlooked — yet is arguably the most crucial — is the user experience. Workers today are expecting a more seamless and easy to use experience with their technology. When it doesn't deliver, users at best are less productive and at worst will simply avoid using it altogether.

The good news is today's camera technology delivers high-powered performance at a budget-friendly value. Consider Vaddio's ConferenceSHOT FX Fixed USB Camera. The USB 3.0 output integrates itself with almost any display or pairing device without needing to navigate some of the more advanced protocols being transmitted using HDMI. The ConferenceSHOT FX also captures uncompressed video up to 1080p/60fps, 3X zoom, manual pan/tilt and other features that drive huddle space needs that will help support ROI models that we'll discuss below.

How do you ensure adoption for the technology investment?

Almost every systems integrator and corporation has been a part of meeting space designs where the investment was made, the technology was installed and employees never used it. The general reason why was complexity. It was just too hard to figure out how to get things going.

Based on today's reliance on app-based video connecting and simplified solutions, that is becoming much less of an issue. That said, it still must be considered.

An example of this simplification is the move away from more robust codecs to employee devices that employees are more comfortable with. Certainly "Zoom Rooms" and Skype for Business supports this trend.

If we only relied on basic Google searches and didn't dig deeper, we would think this setup represents the entire market. But it doesn't. Codecs are alive and well and we're also seeing greater integration options between the codec and other devices that capture — result in a more powerful and productive meeting experience that employees will gravitate to and use.

The OneLINK Bridge Codec Kits for Cisco and Polycom Codecs by Vaddio is an example of this deeper integrated solution that encompasses hardware based codecs yet still enables the simple user experience of cloud conferencing solutions. OneLINK Bridge connects Cisco, Polycom, or Vaddio cameras to codec-based rooms, enabling those rooms to extend their functionality to virtually anyone beyond the limit of just those with the same codec system on the other end. Along with features like an HDBaseT extension with capabilities up to 100 meters, and audio bridging, a Vaddio OneLINK extension system is compatible with the popular Cisco TelePresence SX20 Codec.

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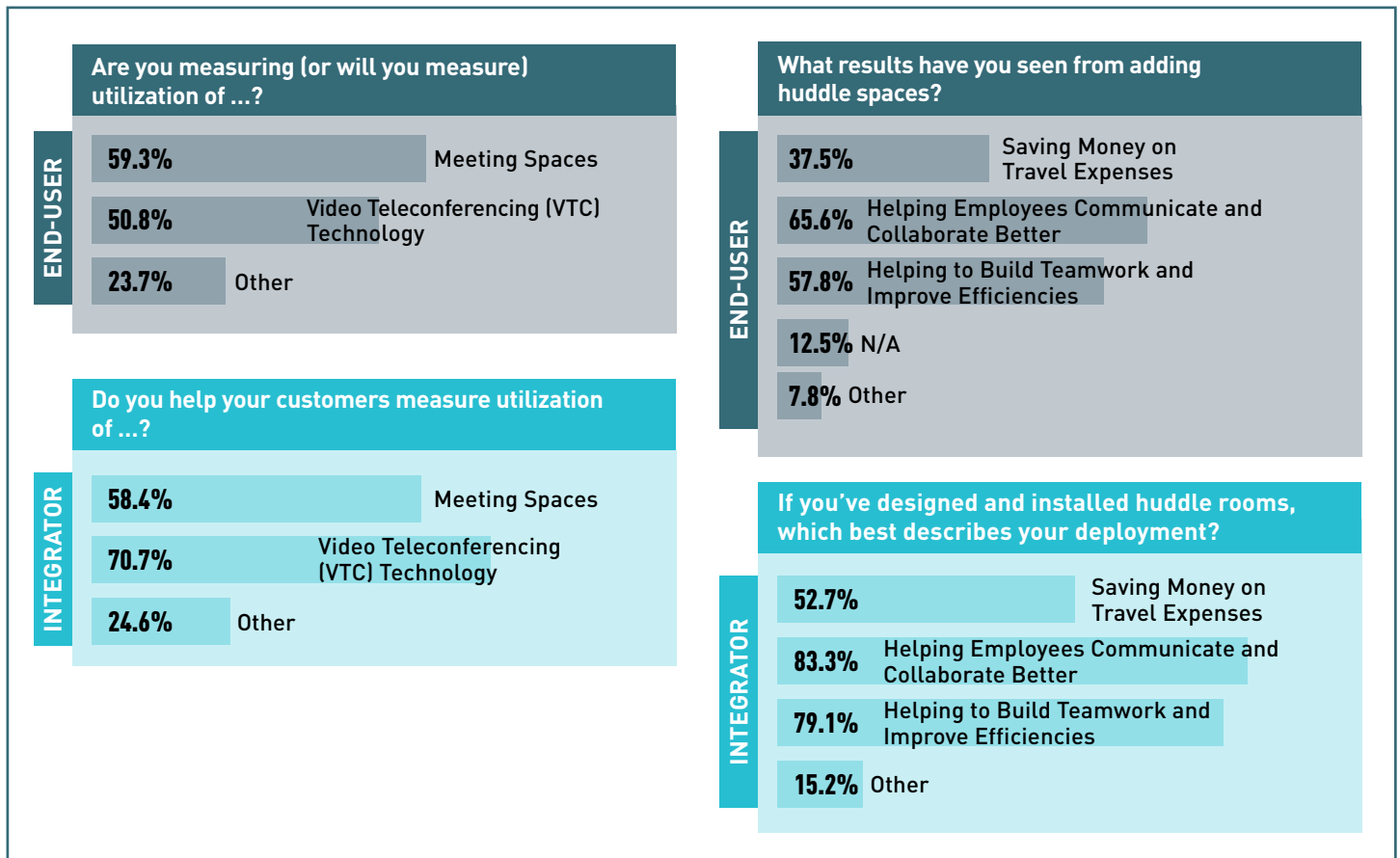
How will you measure success?

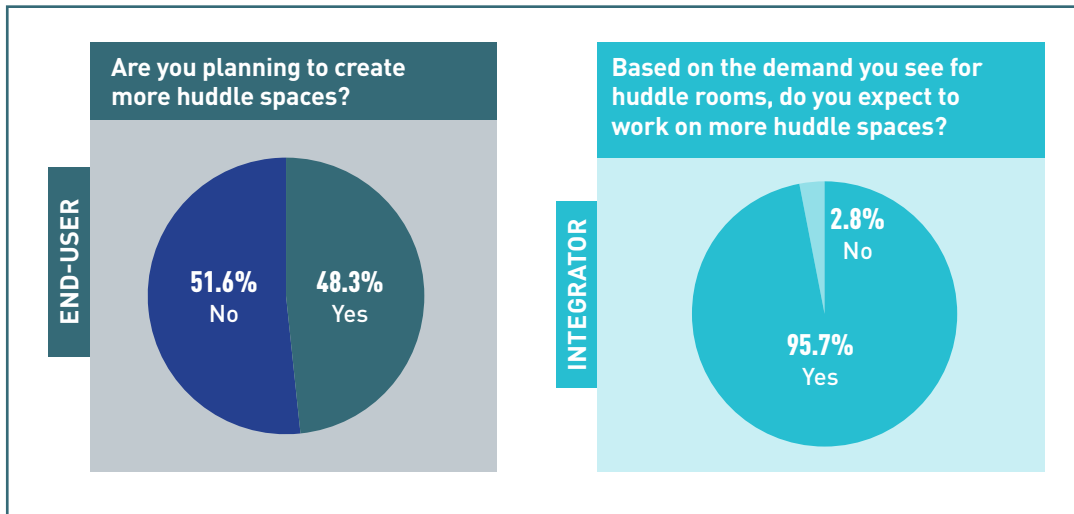
Once you've decided what to use and why, now you'll need to defend the investment and show ROI. Like any goal, the result has to be clearly defined.

Too often, we want "successful" outcomes but rarely take the time to understand what that means. "Successful" is defined as the act of accomplishing an aim or purpose. When looking at your huddle space, you must clearly define the criteria and outcomes you are looking to nurture and most importantly, how to measure them. This includes outcomes such as:

- ▶ How often is each individual space being used? How many hours per day are they getting used?
- ▶ What was the level of engagement with outside parties and which collaboration applications were used?
- ▶ What portion of your travel budget can you save in favor of conferencing? This includes airfare, lodging, meals, taxis and shuttles.
- ▶ What is the value of soft savings like increased efficiencies, faster meeting startup times, better employee engagement, productivity, satisfaction and retention?
- ▶ What equipment is getting used, or not used?
- ▶ Do meetings regularly start on time or are they late from people trying to get the system running?
- ▶ Is more training/instruction needed?

Beginning with an end goal in mind will help capture the data you need while also producing a meeting space that justifies the investment.





While measuring huddle space ROI might be a new concept to technology integrators, it is a necessary component to any organization. Beginning with an end goal in mind will help capture the data you need while also producing a meeting space that justifies the investment.

It's no surprise that today's huddle space is being driven by the daily user. The user is a key aspect of the design and investment while corporations of all sizes are demanding insight to what technologies are being used. Examining exactly how success is defined for a huddle room is a mandatory part of the implementation process. Without it, the employee base will be alienated and the organization will struggle to find top talent.

Perhaps worst of all – lack of huddle room planning means tossing money out the window on technology that is unwanted or unused. ■

12 Considerations for Planning Meeting Spaces

A survey of huddle room customers and integrators shows trends in planning, utilization and benefits that contribute to successful deployment of meeting spaces.

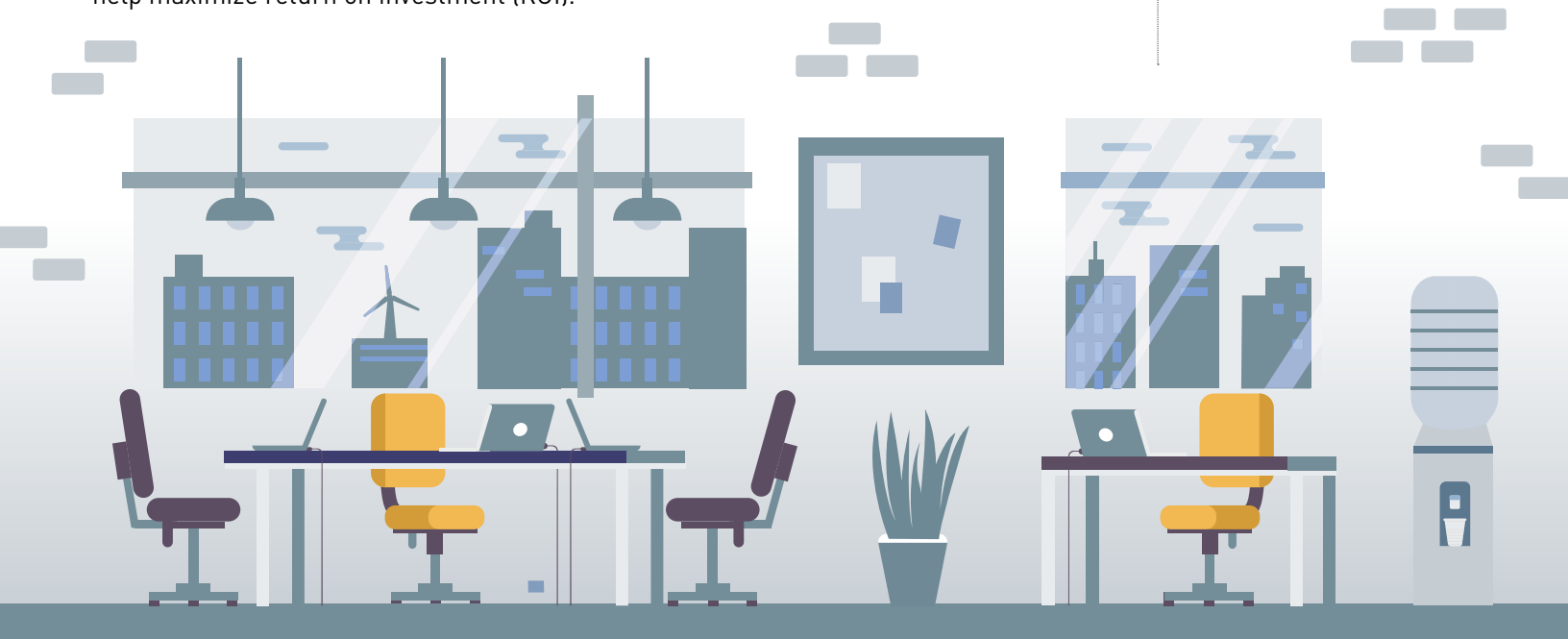
If you've spent much time in the office recently, chances are you're familiar with the concept of huddle rooms. These small meeting and quick-collaboration spaces have become extremely popular as work organizations embrace open-office spaces, provide resources communicating with remote employees and recognize that smaller three- to six-person meetings are far more popular than old-school conferences.

Wainhouse Research has estimated that there are at least 50 million huddle rooms deployed globally, pretty much across every enterprise and market. Meanwhile, demand isn't fading. According to a survey of 108 integration firms that deploy unified communications and collaboration solutions, a staggering 96 percent say that based on the demand they see for huddle rooms, they expect to be working on more very soon.

It's easy to recognize why huddle rooms have become so popular based on our survey of 108 integrators which we coupled with a survey of 204 technology-decision-making end users who have deployed huddle rooms within their organization. Huddle room customers report positive impact on their work flow with 66 percent of customers saying it's improved how employees communicate and collaborate, and 58 percent citing improved teamwork and efficiencies.

The bottom line is that huddle rooms are growing in popularity because companies appreciate them, but it's not as easy as emptying out a coat closet and moving in a table and some chairs. Our surveys uncover trends that lead to success and, in some cases, downfalls of huddle spaces. If you're planning a huddle room, consider these factors to help maximize return on investment (ROI).

66% of end-user customers report that huddle rooms improve how employees communicate and collaborate and 58% cite improved teamwork and efficiencies.

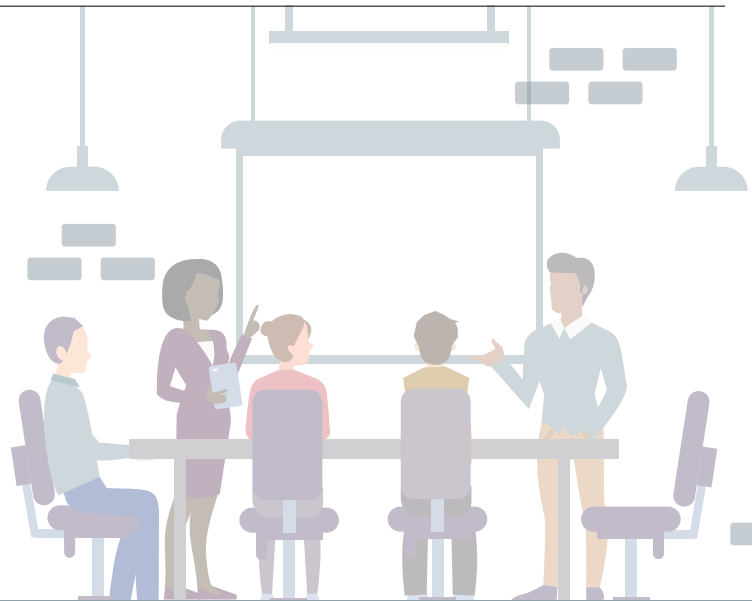


Trend #1: Huddle Rooms Come in Groups

It's relatively uncommon for an organization to invest in just one huddle room. According to our survey of huddle room customers, only one-fourth have added just one huddle room. Our surveyed integrators say they've only provided a customer with solutions for just one huddle room 22 percent of the time. In most cases, customers add multiple huddle rooms in a single building or in a corporate campus for each location of a multi-location organization.

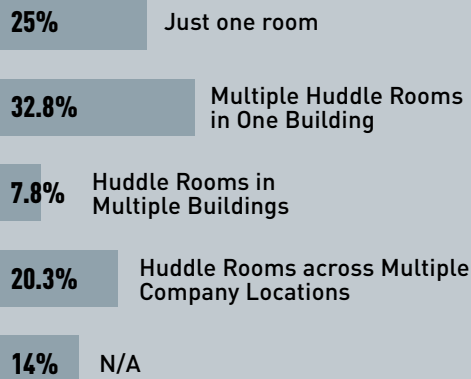
Trend #2: In Huddle Rooms, Technology Upstages All Else

When it comes to what's most important to consider when planning a huddle room, most customers choose creating a quality technology experience. However,

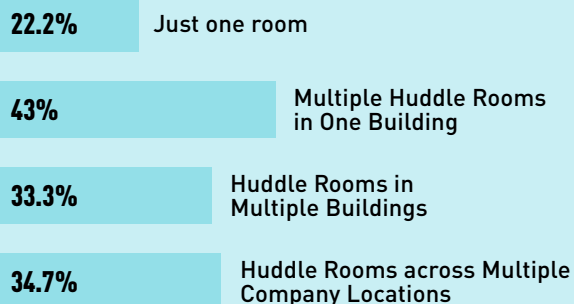


END-USER

If you've added huddle rooms, which best describes your deployment?

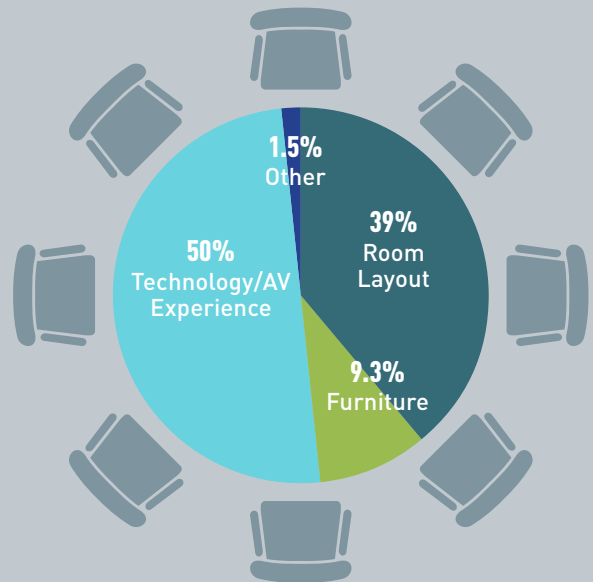


If you've designed and installed huddle rooms, which best describes your deployment?

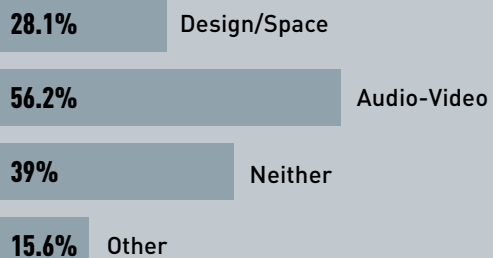


INTEGRATOR

When you decide (or decided) to add huddle room(s) which is the first consideration?



Does your facility have standards for?



room layout was important for a strong minority of respondents. "It was a difficult choice between layout and technology," says one huddle room customer. "Both have to integrate well." Many respondents added similar comments about the importance of blending a collaboration-friendly room layout with the right technology experience, but one customer put it best: "Nobody just talks in meetings anymore. They always display something. More and more, our employees attend meetings remotely, so we need to bring them in via AV."

Trend #3: AV Standards Are Important

More than half of customers say that their facility or organization has established AV standards that they worked within while planning huddle spaces. Those that did seem to embrace the AV standards with one adding it leads to "consistency throughout the building." In many cases, according to a respondent, those standards are borrowed from whitepapers and other AV resources found online.

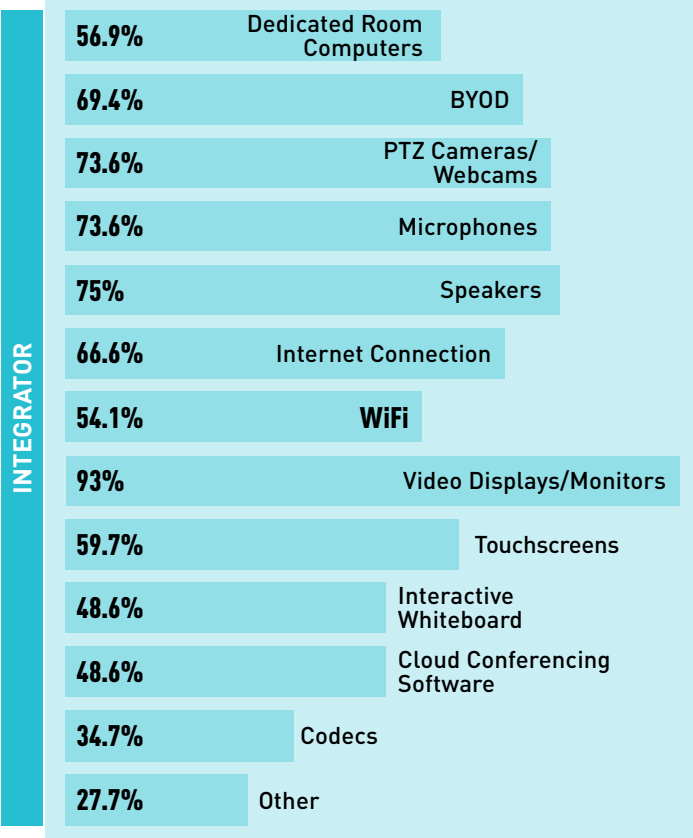
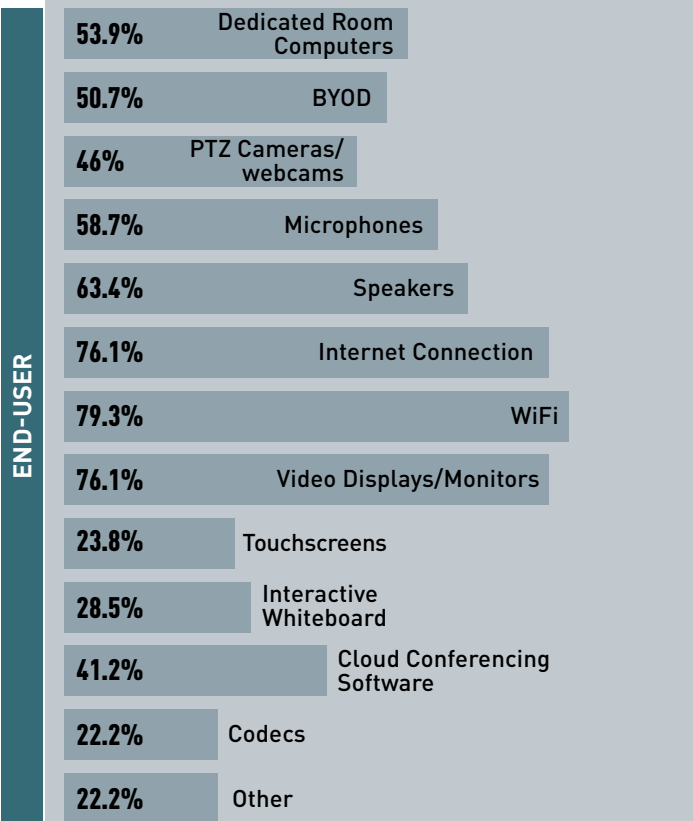
Trend #4: There are Common Denominators for Huddle Room Technologies

When it comes to the technology that needs to be included in huddle rooms for effective collaboration, there are some trends that make sense to follow. We asked integrators which technologies they typically include in huddle rooms and, not surprisingly, all of these were cited by the majority:

- ▶ Video display/monitor
- ▶ Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) Cameras
- ▶ BYOD (bring your own device) solutions
- ▶ Microphones
- ▶ Speakers
- ▶ Internet Connection and WiFi
- ▶ Touchscreens

Also showing up in many huddle rooms, according to integrators, are interactive whiteboards and cloud conferencing solutions.

What technologies and equipment have you typically installed in huddle rooms?



Trend #5: Open Office Space Inspires Huddle Rooms

When we asked integrators how often the huddle rooms they work on coincide with open office space, they said they do 63 percent of the time. Customers similarly said the huddle rooms they've added are in conjunction with open design work spaces.

There's a reason for this, of course. While there are many benefits of open-office spaces, privacy isn't one of them. Employees need spaces to gather for meetings — either for privacy or to avoid distracting others. Huddle rooms solve these challenges.

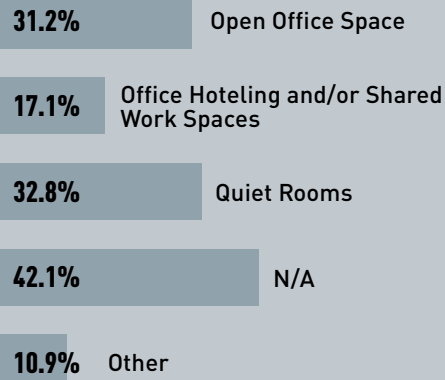
Trend #6: Office Hoteling Inspires Huddle Rooms

Another factor that seems to drive huddle room adoption is companies' embrace of supporting remote employees with office hoteling, shared work spaces or quiet rooms. As remote employees spend time in an office or multi-location employees bounce around, they need places to work, huddle and to meet with groups. A whopping 85 percent of surveyed integrators say that hoteling or quiet rooms are often a factor in adding a huddle room. Meanwhile, half of surveyed customers also said that "hoteling" and "free address" concepts are a factor for adding huddle rooms.

The office hoteling trend is interesting. As many organizations expand while also embracing remote employees, there are a lot of workers that end up "visiting" their offices. They may be traveling to another region and working in their office for a day, or a remote employee might be in the office for face-to-face meetings. Meanwhile, many companies these days don't assign employees desks. Instead, they move to spaces appropriate for the tasks they're working on. Sometimes they might need a private office for a heads-down project. In these cases, companies offer "hoteling" of an office that can be booked for the day. It's no surprise that the embrace of "hoteling" and huddle rooms seems to mirror one another.

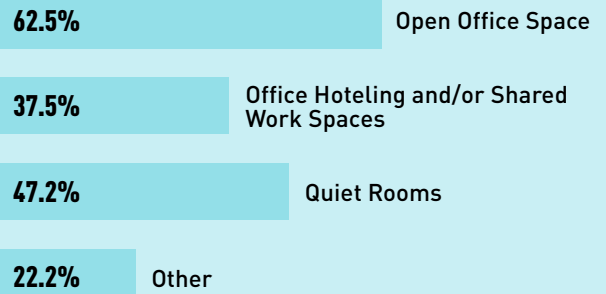
Did your huddle room implementation coincide with ...?

END-USER



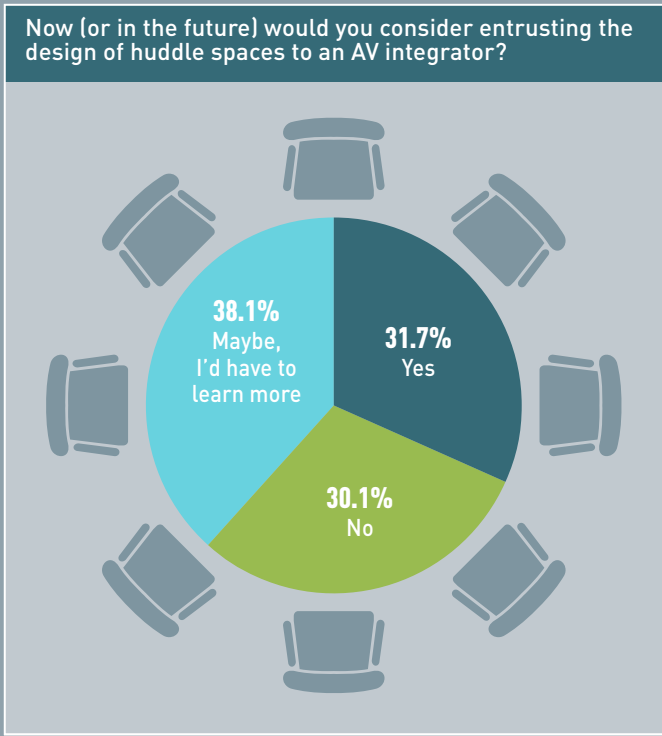
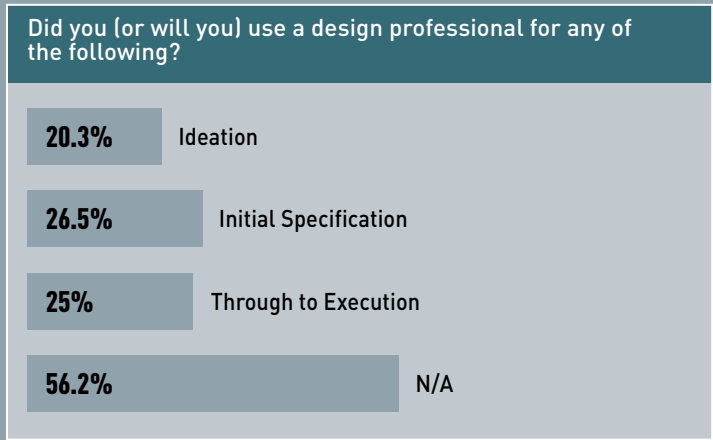
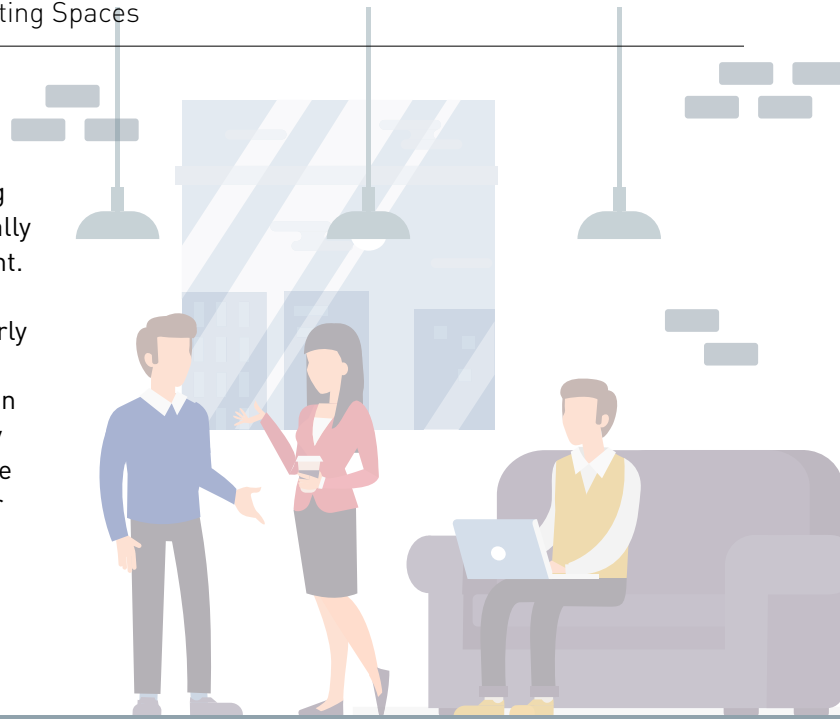
Have your customers' huddle room implementation coincided with ...?

INTEGRATOR



Trend #7: Asking for Huddle Room Advice from Professional AV Integrators

When customers add a huddle room, it goes without saying that they want to see return on their investment. That usually means leaning on professionals to make sure it's done right. As such, about a third of customers say they lean on an AV integrator when designing a huddle room and another nearly 40 percent say they might use an integrator if they learned more about that process. Most customers do enlist a design professional. While more than half of respondents say they used a design professional for help in planning their huddle space, among those that did 27 percent leaned on them for the initial specification, 25 percent sought help all the way through to execution and 20 percent just got ideas from a design professional.



Trend #8: IT Teams Influence Huddle Room Purchase

We're not saying only IT professionals can purchase and plan a huddle room for your organization. If you don't sit in the IT department, however, it's likely that your purchasing decisions will be influenced by an IT colleague. We asked integrators who in their customers' organizations are the key decision makers in planning huddle room solutions and nearly 70 percent cited the IT department. We asked customers who is key in making huddle room planning decisions within their organization and 64 percent said IT. There are many other influencers. Over half of integrators say facilities managers have a big say. Both integrators and customers say executives and department managers are vital to the process of planning huddle rooms. The overwhelming influence of IT, however, appears to be a factor in most purchasing processes.





Trend #9: Huddle Room Training

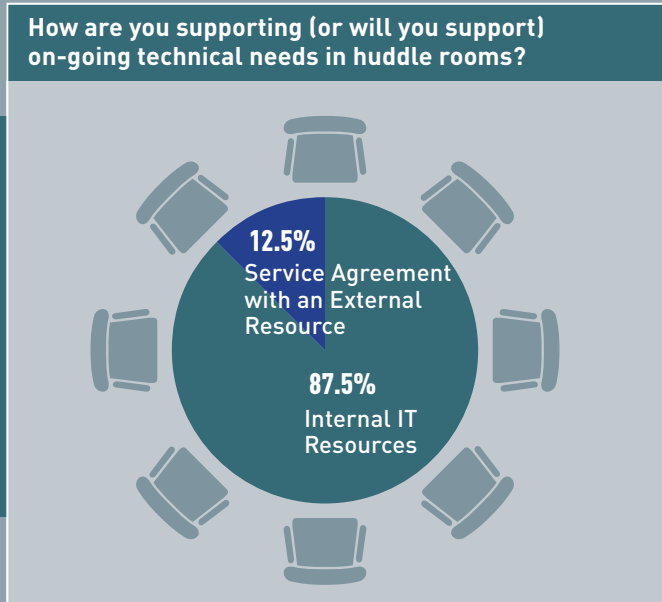
Too Often an Oversight

It's surprising that only 53 percent of surveyed customers say they have training programs for huddle room technologies. The goal, of course, is for technology to be so simple that anybody can walk into a huddle room, begin sharing content from their devices and collaborate with remote employees. The reality, however, is that most employees need a little guidance, especially at the beginning. It's likely the 47 percent that say they don't have huddle room technology training programs aren't maximizing their return on investment.

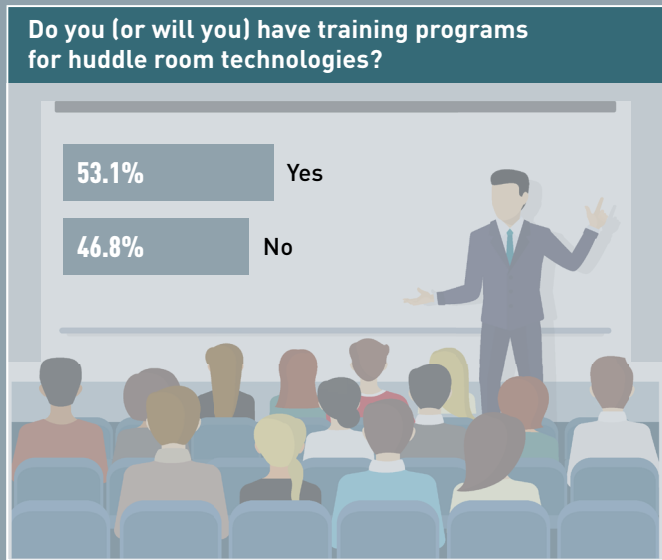
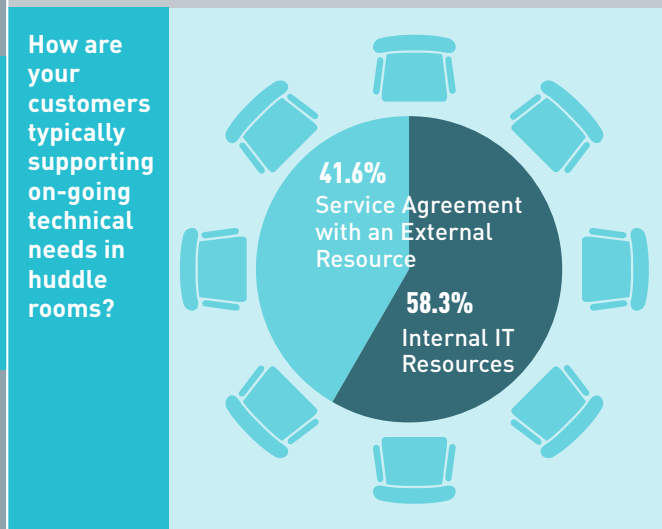
Trend #10: Huddle Rooms Require Support

Most organizations with huddle rooms lean on their IT departments for on-going technology support needs, even though that might be to the chagrin of integration firms that offer managed services directly related to the huddle room solutions they offer. Among surveyed customers, 87.5 percent say they lean on internal IT resources while 12.5 percent use service agreements with an external resource. Surveyed integrators report that 58 percent of their huddle room customers lean on their own IT departments and they deliver service contracts to 42 percent. The reality is that integration firms specializing in collaborative communication technologies can offer more than the break-fix support of an internal IT department.

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INTEGRATOR





Trend #11: Most Huddle Room Customers Measure Utilization

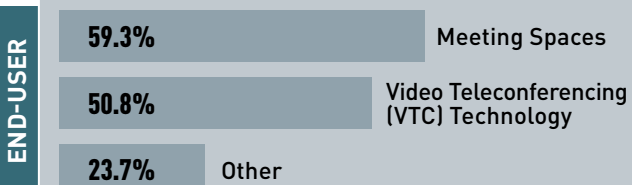
Those who invest in huddle rooms want data to show whether or not the spaces and the technologies are actually being used. Among surveyed customers, 60 percent measure utilization of the meeting spaces and 51 percent keep tabs on use of the technology. Integrators tend to offer help with 58 percent measuring their customers' huddle room usage and 71 percent tracking use of video teleconferencing technology. In terms of what the data tells customers, respondents share some examples:

- ▶ Time spent by employees in the spaces
- ▶ Whether or not additional spaces are needed
- ▶ Levels of technology that are actually used
- ▶ Types of technology that employees feel comfortable with

Trend #12: Huddle Rooms Impact Workflow Significantly

Organizations that invest in huddle rooms tend to see an impact on how their employees collaborate and in reduced need for travel. Among surveyed huddle room customers, 66 percent say huddle rooms have improved how employees communicate and collaborate, 58 percent say it has helped to build teamwork and improve efficiencies, and 38 percent say the collaboration-friendly spaces have saved money on travel expenses. Integrators are seeing even more dramatic impact among their huddle room customers – 83 percent see huddle rooms helping employees communicate and collaborate better, 79 percent point to better teamwork and improved efficiencies, and 53 percent report travel cost savings.

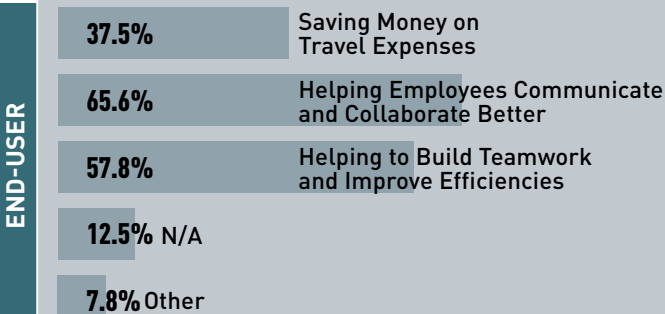
Are you measuring (or will you measure) utilization of ...?



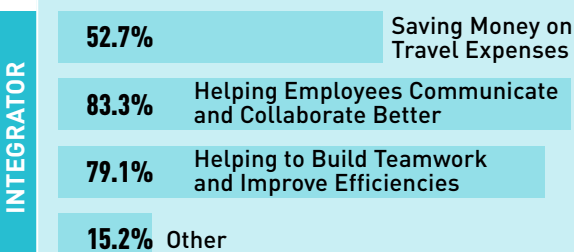
Do you help your customers measure utilization of ...?



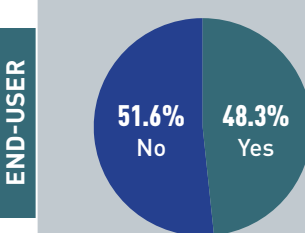
What results have you seen from adding huddle spaces?



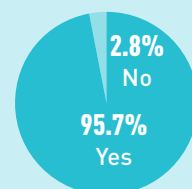
If you've designed and installed huddle rooms, which best describes your deployment?



Are you planning to create more huddle spaces?



Based on the demand you see for huddle rooms, do you expect to work on more huddle spaces?



Huddle Room Shopping List: What to Consider

A good plan for building a huddle room starts with understanding goals related to conferencing and cameras, device connectivity, furniture and décor.



The huddle room has been dominating corporate conversations for the past couple of years. Their popularity is nothing short of an evolutionary step forward in terms of how we interact with both each other and content.

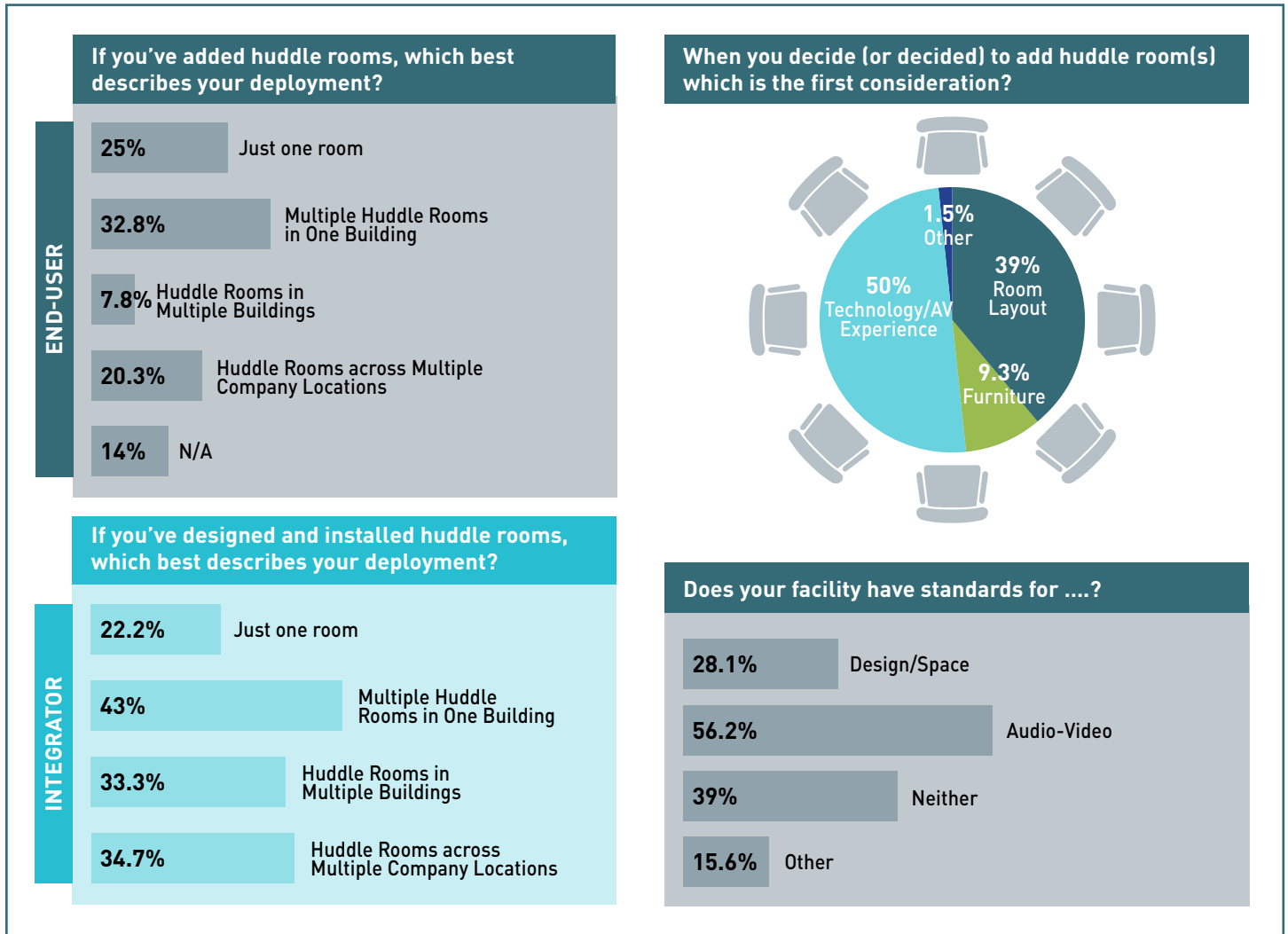
And, despite our general understanding of what a huddle space is, many companies do not know where to begin when designing them. Huddle rooms are touted as a simplified and streamlined alternative to more complex meeting rooms, but determining what should go into these spaces can seem overwhelming. This article examines the key aspects of a huddle space you should consider and criteria for each.

The first step to any good shopping experience is to have a clear understanding who you are shopping for prior to heading out. Just as you'll have one strategy shopping for your child and another for your spouse, you must develop a buying strategy based on your own corporate profile.

Consider variables such as:

- ▶ Demographics of your employee base
- ▶ Types of devices your employees use
- ▶ Whether content is on the cloud or stored locally
- ▶ Percentage of remote workers

Designing a huddle room is about more than just picking up a display and a few chairs. There are also audio considerations, design, lighting and other aspects that need to be addressed.



It's also a good step to look at your organization's device road map. Over the next three to five years, will it be phasing out laptops in favor of tablets? Will the group be experiencing a shift in employees, whether it's from retirement, growth or other factors that change the corporate employee makeup? Once that due diligence is done, it's time to begin shopping.

Like any shopping list, it's important to be organized and group your list by aisle to make your experience faster, more enjoyable and, of course, more productive. Designing a huddle room is about more than just picking up a display and a few chairs. There are also video and audio considerations, design, lighting and other aspects that need to be addressed and factored into your list. For simplicity, we have broken the shopping list into three major categories — conferencing/cameras, device connectivity and furniture/decor.

Conferencing and Cameras

Videoconferencing: Over the past few years, we have seen exponential growth in videoconferencing technology. Once reserved for only the largest of companies, we now see almost any sized business invest in videoconferencing. These days, corporations know they must invest in a videoconferencing platform. The question now is which

videoconferencing tool is best for your company and should the solution be cloud-based or on-premises?

Cloud vs. On Premises: There are a few aspects you should look at when determining whether to go cloud or keep your information on the premises. You'll need to define both features and identify infrastructure concerns like multipoint conferencing, interoperability, streaming and recording capabilities, network management availability, security and firewall levels, to name a few. Once you have an understanding of this, you can move on to the next step — what to buy. Establishing the right videoconferencing solution will depend on a few factors, including the size of the business and use cases. (Remember your pre-shopping due diligence?) Here are questions to address:

- ▶ Would you prefer a meeting room device or SaaS to work with third-party PCs and peripherals for a meeting room?
- ▶ Would you prefer a hybrid mix of in-room hardware with a SaaS component?
- ▶ Do you prefer long-term service agreements?
- ▶ What are the video and audio quality requirements?
- ▶ Do you need integration with file sharing and other collaborative apps?

There are many cloud-based and local conferencing systems and all offer compelling value. Entering this process in reverse, meaning looking at systems before defining corporate requirements, you will be drowned in options. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Cameras: When you decided to have videoconferencing, you also decided to invest in a video camera for the space. You're now presented with another buying option. How do you choose the right videoconferencing camera for the needs of your huddle room? Almost 50 percent of respondents to a recent huddle space survey indicated they will be investing in a video camera for their conference room. This is a driving force in today's meeting space because corporations across the globe use videoconferencing cameras on a daily basis.

Research has shown that the buying criteria can be broken down into six categories:

- ▶ **Cost** — Not only cost per camera but total number of cameras needed. (Remember, you typically build multiple huddle spaces.) Type of camera (e.g. webcam, PTZ, face detection, speaker tracking, etc.) is also a cost factor.
- ▶ **Image Quality** — What types of meetings are being captured? Basic departmental meetings can probably sacrifice some quality but engagement with clients might require higher integrity. Video aspects to measure are resolution, pixel utilization, quality of the zoom and light requirements.
- ▶ **Room Coverage** — You want to avoid "tele-absence," which is when a person is in the room but the camera cannot get them in the field of view. Cameras with a wider horizontal field of view (FOV) work best for huddle rooms based on the spaces' relative smaller size compared to a traditional meeting space.
- ▶ **Connectivity and Interoperability** — You will need to select a camera with proper outputs for your equipment – USB, HDBaseT, HDMI or another format. How does that affect its ability to connect into the display, projector or maybe even a switch?
- ▶ **Flexibility and Control** — Similar to room coverage, do you need a motorized camera or stationary camera to capture what you need? How can you adjust the camera's settings,

When you decided to have video conferencing you also decided to invest in a video camera for the space.

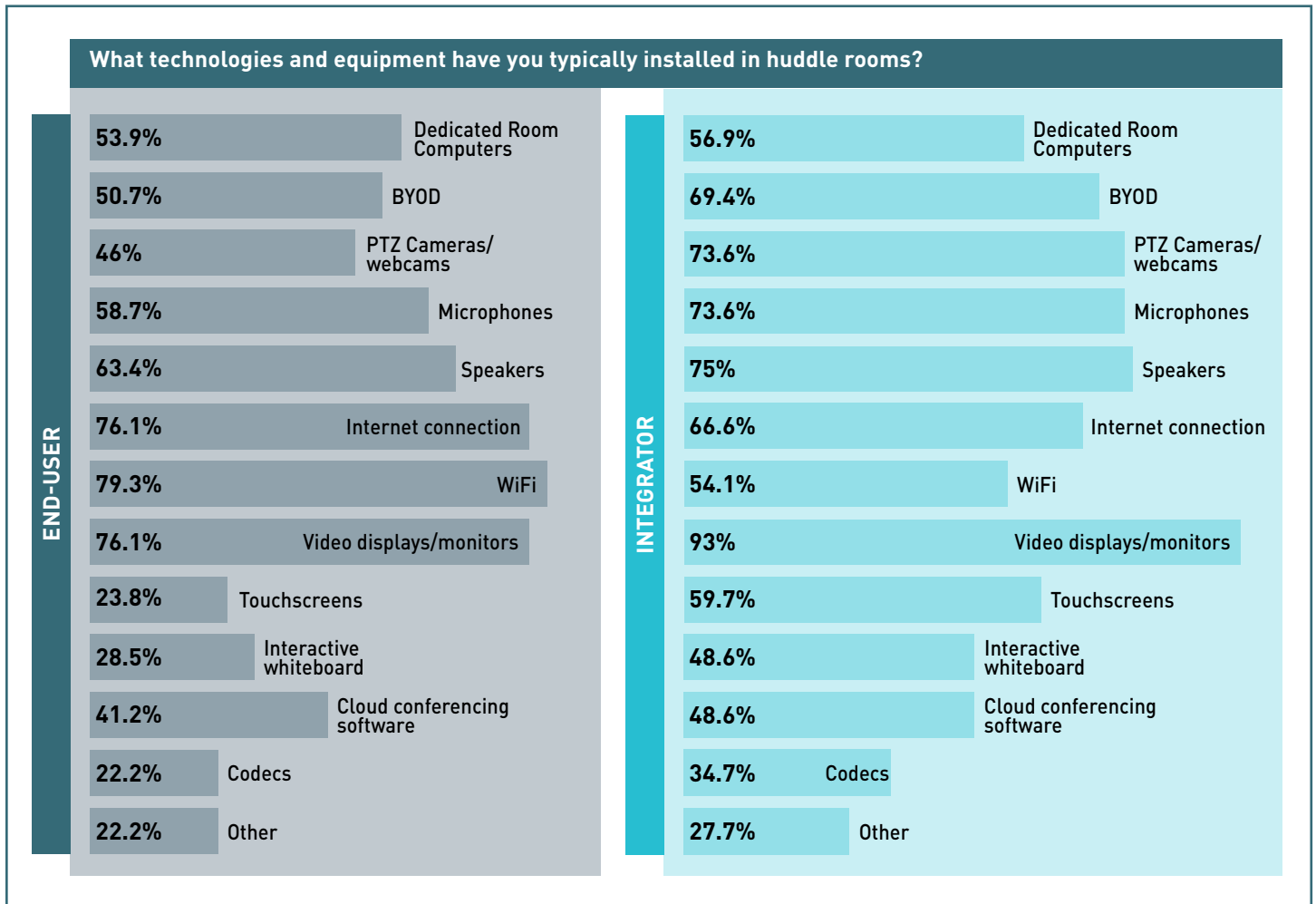
zoom, etc.? Do cameras need to be remotely accessible? Do you want to integrate a control system or trigger for camera motion?

- ▶ **Integration** — Cameras are more than just isolated, stand-alone technology. They can be integrated with analytics engines, larger AV systems and even security. Determine the ecosystem your camera will be part of and how it should communicate with its surroundings.

Device Connectivity

On the surface, device connectivity is about the devices employees or guests will use in the huddle space to display content. Will they be wired devices (laptops) or wireless (tablets, phones, laptops) or a hybrid of both? There are many solutions to cover connectivity.

- ▶ **Wired** — This may be one of the simpler connectivity options. Determine the output of the device and map it to an extender or possibly a switch depending on needs. Connectivity for PCs and MAC laptops are the standard.
- ▶ **Wireless** — This is a slightly more complex issue as you are getting deeper into IT issues such as network connectivity and heightened security concerns. Look at the operating systems of mobile devices being used (Android, iOS, Chromebooks) and how you want to connect (dongle, app, closed system, etc.) and look for solutions that fit your needs.



- ▶ **Hybrid** – Many of today’s corporations need to accommodate both wired and wireless devices. There are integrated hybrid solutions or you can use the output of the wireless into an input of a wired for the same effect.

Furniture & Décor

This may be the largest line item on a huddle room budget, which may be a surprise to some people. Huddle rooms pride themselves on being “cool” and therefore more visually appealing and ergonomic styles are considered.

There are also downstream effects of your decisions. For example, you may choose to go with glass walls for an open feel to the space. But what is the effect of that glass wall if it’s adjacent to a window and the sun glare impedes the ability to see the display? Cool vs. practical needs to be clearly outlined.

There are other considerations with the huddle space such as cabling, overall cost and types of collaborative solution sets you may want (e.g. white-boarding, file sharing, etc.) but those are generally secondary. The key drivers are the conference system, camera and device connectivity. You can always add on functionality as your needs grow and the spaces are better utilized.

This process is not as daunting as it may look. Most of these checklist items you need to cover are easy to establish or have already been defined. Remember that a huddle room is meant as a space where people meet, gather and share ideas. Everything in the room merely supports that business function. Overcomplicating the process leads to the confusion. With proper due diligence, you’ll be surprised how easy this can be. ■

Remember that a huddle room is meant as a space where people meet, gather and share ideas. Everything in the room merely supports that business function.

Huddle Room: Forward-Focused Office Strategies

AV-over-IP and procurement of room utilization metrics are poised to play bigger roles as huddle room adoption continues to gain steam.



While it's easy to understand how important conferencing is for a huddle room, the bigger challenge is anticipating future needs.

The huddle room is one of the most popular and dominant forces in professional AV today. They are being adopted by almost every industry and by companies of all sizes. And they are not building one or two of these spaces. In some cases, they are being built by the hundreds.

The appeal of the huddle space is obvious:

- ▶ They accommodate the behaviors of the millennial generation that now occupies about half the workforce.
- ▶ They are relatively inexpensive to build, are dynamic in their ability to change with technology demands and seamlessly enable collaborative settings and videoconferencing.
- ▶ They also serve as the perfect solution to open floor plans that are loud and distracting.
- ▶ The huddle space is an oasis where employees can meet and discuss deeper layers of business.

So what is the next stage in the evolution of the huddle space? What will tomorrow's space look like and what might we expect?

What's Next in Huddle Rooms?

AV-over-IP (or audio visual content being distributed over an IP network) is a hot topic in the technology community. On the one hand, technology firms and companies are

excited about the prospect of more easily distributing content to audiences over their networks and, of course, that applies to multimedia content that might be used in a huddle room meeting. On the other hand, however, there are concerns related to IP security and bandwidth when a network takes on that content distribution task.

When it comes to huddle rooms, AV-over-IP promises to be an important topic as organizations and technology providers figure out the best approach for each unique situation. In some cases, organizations may choose to have huddle room devices connected to a dedicated network instead of the company wide network.

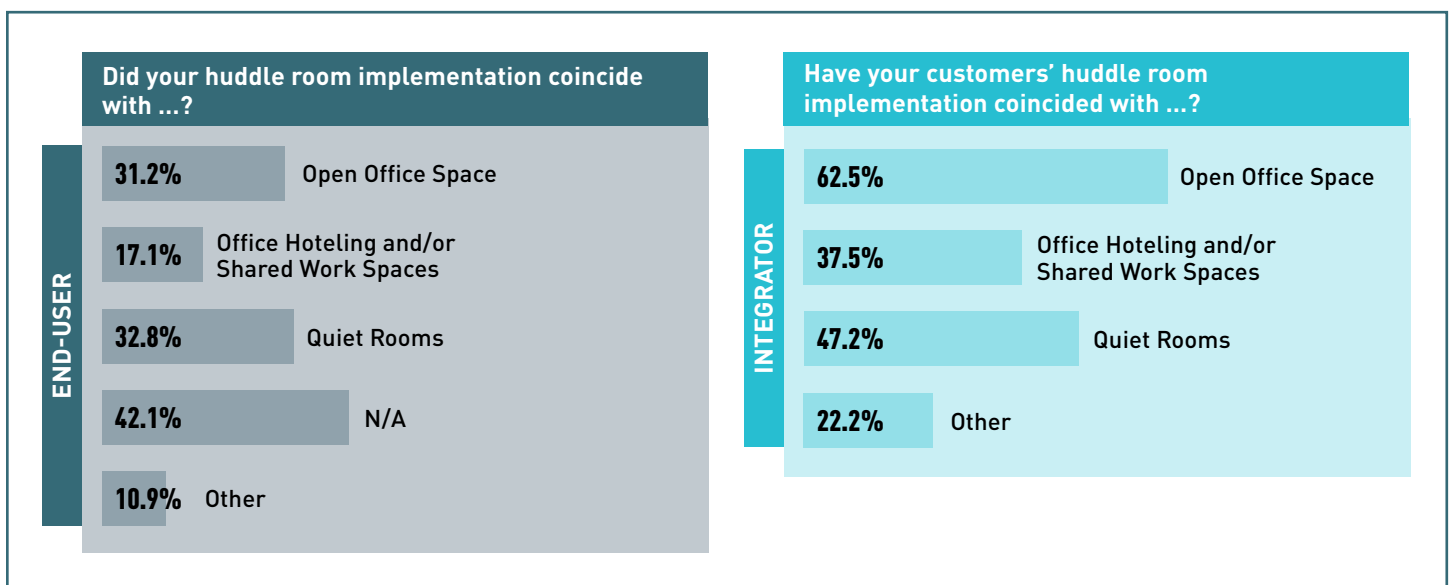
However, having huddle room devices connected on one IP network also provides opportunities for companies. For one, it allows them to aggregate and manage content – something that can be extremely beneficial.

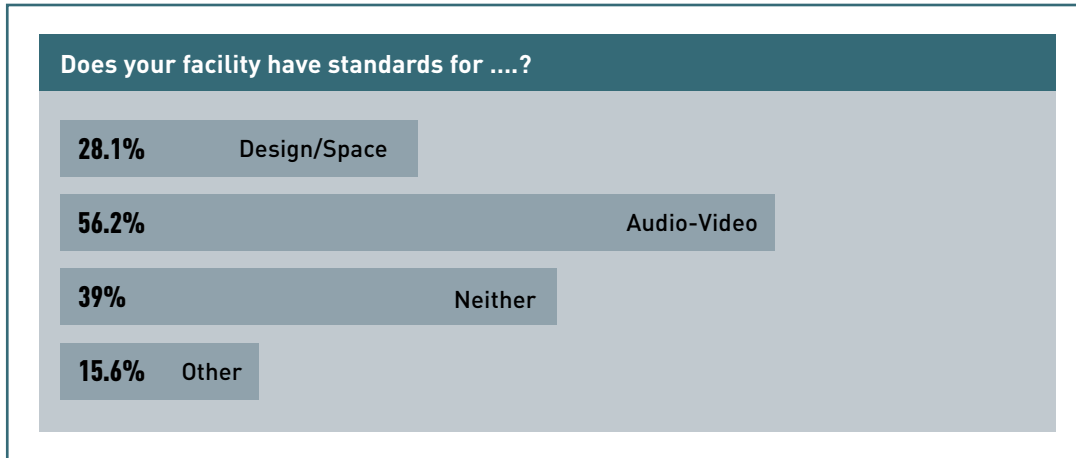
Companies are increasingly focused on gathering business metrics, particularly from meeting rooms, that offer a window into how work is being done. Data collected from devices in a huddle room connected to an IP network can reveal trends such as how many employees participate in a typical meeting in that room, how frequently the room is being used, how often the videoconferencing technology is engaged, as well as how often audio-only conferencing occurs.

This type of information can help companies make better decisions related to the number of huddle rooms they need, the number of unified communication and collaboration solutions they need, and generally help them hire and plan space more effectively.

Gathering information about how meeting rooms and technology are being used will also streamline training in the future. Companies increasingly need to provide intuitive technology solutions for employees who have an expectation of seamlessness. As the huddle room category continues to mature, companies are likely to create and adhere to standards to create a more reliable and consistent user experience. Room utilization

Companies are increasingly focused on gathering business metrics, particularly from meeting rooms, that offer a window into how work is being done.





data will certainly help companies and technology providers create those standards — and understand which under-utilized features might benefit from more end-user training.

One thing is for sure, with a majority of surveyed huddle room users reporting demonstrated benefits — such as saved time and money on employee travel, better communications and collaboration between employees, improved teamwork, and better efficiencies — the standards for these collaborative meeting spaces will continue to evolve. It will be interesting to watch the future of huddle rooms unfold. ■

Data Tells the Story

We surveyed 204 technology decision makers at organizations and 167 technology system integrators to acquire the data presented in this analysis.



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