

# Multi-Platform Collaboration Solution: Why It Can Be The Best Fit



ENERGIZE YOUR CONNECTIONS™





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# Introduction

When investigating various collaboration platforms, many companies make a gross assumption that a single platform can meet all of the various needs throughout the enterprise. This White Paper will provide an alternative look to platform selection: a hybrid approach. Put simply, implementing multiple platforms through a single-source Conferencing Service Provider (CSP), as well as implementing multiple price models to achieve maximum ROI.

After reading this White Paper you should have information about how to approach a collaboration platform provider decision, how to establish key decision criteria, and to understand the advantages of implementing multiple platforms through a single-source provider.



## Overview of Approach

The first step in investigating various collaboration platforms should be to understand your needs and objectives. It's critical that this review be based on BOTH the enterprise objectives AND the end-user objectives. Here are points that should be considered:

### Enterprise Objectives

- > Standardization – what other Enterprise systems are already deployed (or will be deployed) that a collaboration solution may integrate with or complement?
- > Consolidation of vendors – is there a need within the enterprise to support less vendors
- > Limiting number of tools necessary to support
- > End user objectives

### Ease-Of-Use

- > Variety of meeting experiences/use cases
- > Quality of presentation
- > Interactivity

Next, investigate what's available. Some key considerations when exploring platforms are:

### Name Recognition

This can provide an automatic comfort level with end users. Many will likely have their individual opinions, but a platform that users recognize can usually be easier adopted.

### Reliability

All vendors have published information regarding uptime. A CSP is an excellent resource for reviewing reliability, system requirements and bandwidth utilization information for many different platforms in a more concise, easier-to-understand manner than fishing through the plethora of published information that's available.

### Feature Set

Use this mainly as an initial disqualifying measure and not a final decision metric. If a platform does not possess a critical feature required by the enterprise or end-user community then it can be considered for disqualification, but comparing feature sets side-by-side usually requires expanded information to better understand a true comparison, and even a live demonstration for ultimate clarity.

### Enterprise System integration capabilities

Key for review only AFTER enterprise objectives have been outlined regarding key system integration needs. It's much better to define the value of system integration based on the current enterprise systems and integration desires – common systems to review for integration are LMS, CRM, Email, and HR. The point here is that if you learn that a platform can integrate with your LMS, for example, and then make a decision based on the ability for the platform to integrate with your LMS, make sure your eLearning or Training/ Education department needs or wants this integration. Too often, decisions are made based on integration capabilities of the platform, only to learn that there was never an objective or requirement to build the integration.



## General Decision Criteria

Now that you've outlined the key objectives at the enterprise and the end-user level and have investigated what's available, let's look at some typical decision points:

### Cost

Understand the different pricing models and how they can be used to maximize your ROI. Regardless of the size of your organization, the more data you have on current and expected usage, the more you can apply the various price models to your usage patterns to optimize value and minimize cost.

### Capabilities, Performance and Scalability

In most cases this becomes considerably subjective. Make sure to identify a key user population (from different departments or with different use cases) that will test/trial the platforms being considered and provide the subjective feedback necessary to make an educated decision.

### License (on-premise) vs. Service (SaaS or ASP)

This is a critical enterprise resource review exercise that can significantly impact the decision process. It's important to weigh the resources that are available to devote to implementation and management of a collaboration platform and the soft/hard costs associated with this in addition to the actual platform cost. Over time, it can be less expensive to deploy an on-premise solution provided you have the necessary resources.

### Service and Support

Understand how the platforms provide these key service/support components:

- > In-meeting support for end-users – telephone, email, chat, etc.
- > Event production capabilities – white glove treatment options, event planning, ancillary event services options
- > Implementation training and adoption – what's offered on-line (live training and recorded tutorials), and on-site



## Customer Example

The following is a valuable example of an organization that has conducted the enterprise and end-user objectives review and investigated the various platform capabilities, all while meeting enterprise cost reduction mandates.

In this example, the need to standardize on a collaboration platform was imperative to reduce costs (leverage the volume of all of the individual corporate entities instead of each company managing separate contracts). The decision and on-going management of the initiative was the responsibility of CK Johnson, Manager of Collaborative Technologies. Going in to the project, Mr. Johnson's main objective was to "educate users that were paying far too much without even knowing it. Seeing the varying price models and mounting charges, we knew we could save considerable expense using a centrally managed platform." Many current users had contracts on WebEx and felt that it provided the most familiarity and easiest deployment/adoption option.

In addition, there were some individual use-cases that required alternative platforms, so a CSP was able to meet those individual needs. Premiere Global Services deployed a supported version of WebEx Enterprise Edition for training and everyday usage, as well as pockets of Adobe Connect for the delivery of rich-media presentations, and Brainshark for the delivery of on-demand mass consumption eLearning.

"It's tremendous to have the flexibility to provide anything that one of my customer needs, and know that service and support is a non-issue with Premiere," says Mr. Johnson. "What started as a tremendous cost savings exercise has turned into significant increased productivity. A group calls me and says they need to accomplish a new on-line meeting or event and we can present options that help them pull it off easily. Before, the group may have spent weeks or months trying to figure out whom to go with on their own, now we're ready to go in just a few days. And the best part is they come back and thank me in the end. I couldn't do this without the resources and people I work with at Premiere."

Premiere was able to work closely with WebEx to deploy a consolidated model and open the platform to all employees. Premiere also provides on-going training to new users and groups, and helps them learn how to begin using the technology effectively. The company was able to standardize on a provider instead of a platform, to achieve its vendor consolidation objectives and cost savings mandates.

Moreover, Premiere is able to provide objective consulting for end-users and include them in the existing WebEx contract, or provide an enterprise-approved alternative if needed. This ensures the end users are met with exactly the right technology for the need. At the enterprise level, they're able to work in a true "partnering" environment knowing that Premiere is able to maintain a high degree of end-user satisfaction while always aware of enterprise initiatives, including cost savings.



## The Premiere Global Value Proposition

As a Conferencing Service Provider (CSP), Premiere Global is different than a platform provider in three key aspects:

- > Platform Choice
- > Service and Support, including Training and Adoption
- > Technology Innovation – building and integrating technologies to spread across modalities and systems

### Platform Choice

Premiere recognizes that web collaboration platforms are not “one size fits all” and provides more platforms than any other CSP. This flexibility in the offering allows an Account Team to become dramatically creative in positioning the technologies to best fit unique requirements. It also allows objectivity and customer-focused consulting as there is no internal “hidden agenda” to position one platform over another. Whereas a platform provider has only a single platform to use to fit as many unique business cases as possible, Premiere maintains a nimble and flexible approach.

Premiere’s core collaboration offerings include its proprietary platform, Netspoke, as well as WebEx, Microsoft Live Meeting, and Adobe ConnectPro. In addition, Premiere provides a Webcast (streaming) platform and an on-demand solution platform, powered by Brainshark. Premiere also maintains a close partnership with IBM and offers audio integration with Sametime.

### Service and Support

Premiere provides in-meeting support by pressing \*o within any Premiere conference call and is able to support moderators and end-users with any audio or web issue or question. Users demand this level of attention, as many times there can be a “panic moment” when an on-line meeting starts. Regardless of a technology issue or an “education” issue, Premiere’s support model ensures all hosts and participants get what they need so meetings are successful.



Premiere has also productized its Training and Adoption support program, called the “Premiere On boarding Program” or “POP.” It encompasses a comprehensive roll-out plan and includes dedicated implementation resources managing to a customer-defined timeline. Premiere provides multi-language collateral and templates. We offer live and on-demand training programs as well as leverage our global staff to facilitate on-site customer trainings.

## Technology Integration

Premiere focuses its integration efforts to include:

### Audio Host Controls

The ability to manage the telephone audio conference call within the web collaboration console

### Enterprise System integration

- > Premiere has built an Outlook and Notes toolbar for ease in scheduling conference calls and web meetings
- > Open XML API's – Premiere takes pride in being able to provide the open API's necessary to automate and manage conferencing users within an enterprise. These can be used to add, change or delete user profiles to mirror the same activity within the HR system.

### Mobility

Premiere recognizes the growing demand for the mobile workforce and provides mobile apps to launch or manage a call.

Premiere also boasts the most robust self-service conferencing management tool in the industry. The Conferencing Portal allows customers the ability to instantly create and manage user accounts, conference call and web meeting features, and view meeting reports and other admin or profile information. It alleviates the need to rely on a service rep, or call into a service center, to submit request and wait for confirmation. It automates and processes - literally “on-demand” - to further extend the capabilities and level of service that most of today's customer's demand.



## Advantages to the “Hybrid” Multi-Platform Approach

Finally, the advantages to implementing a multi-platform solution that is provided by a single-source vendor include:

### **The Ability to Meet Enterprise Objectives and Specific End-User Needs**

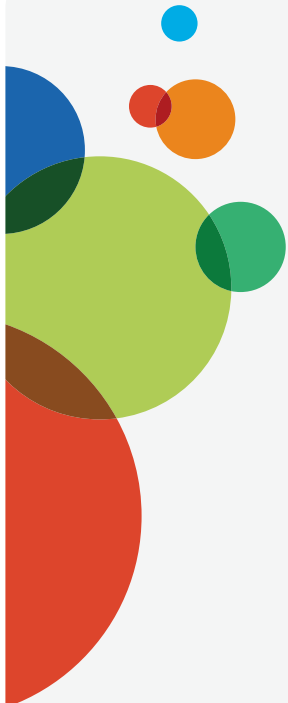
As already presented the ability to “partner” with a vendor that offers a suite of products suggests flexibility in being able to match specific unique needs with the most appropriate solution available, all while meeting pre-determined enterprise objectives.

### **Cost Effectiveness**

The CSP can actually negotiate with a platform provider on the customer’s behalf and even act as a “buyer’s agent” or advocate in many cases. Plus, a significant point to consider with a CSP is the ability supplement a traditional enterprise user license (such as a concurrent seat pricing model or a named host pricing model) with a per-minute usage price model. This has become a fast growing trend where an enterprise establishes a license/site for its heavy or regular users, and supplements it by provisioning the rest of the organization on a per-minute site. This way the service is ALWAYS on – anybody that needs to run a meeting has the ability to within minutes. But there’s no wasted licenses or paying for services that go un-used. It becomes the best of both worlds.

For more information about web conferencing products from Premiere Global Services, Please visit <http://www.premiereglobal.com/conferencing/web-conferencing/>.

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