



## HOW TO DELIVER THE MEETING ROOM EXPERIENCE USERS EXPECT

Gold  
Microsoft Partner



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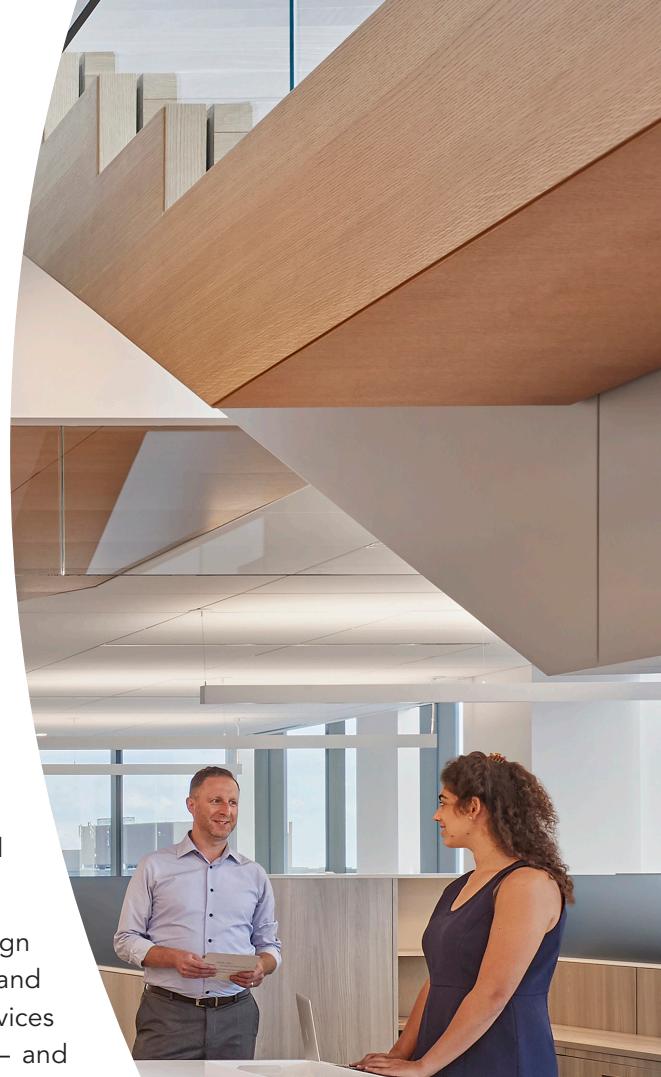
# Evolution of the Meeting Space

The business playbook has been rewritten. Once a luxury, work from home philosophies are now broadly accepted. Workers who return to offices find new layouts that embrace open spaces with fewer desks. Businesses have adopted flexible staffing models that allow workers to split time between the office and home, and make their own decisions as to where, when and how they contribute.

These changes have created urgency around the value of the meeting space, and inspired businesses and workers to rethink how these rooms are equipped and used. With workers spread over many physical and remote locations, we are learning new technologies and methods that help us freely and effectively collaborate.

The burden is now on businesses to deliver meeting room experiences that address these changing collaborative environments. Room designs must now equally account for physical and remote collaboration, from equipping huddle spaces for smaller in-room groups; to choosing conferencing platforms that make remote attendees feel like equal contributors in even the largest of conference rooms.

This eBook explores the evolution of the modern meeting space; the design challenges that await us across interoperability, management, security and standardization; and customized technology solutions and managed services that will help the global business community and workforce adjust to – and succeed with – the new hybrid work model.



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## Inside the Microsoft Teams Room





**"There is this feeling now that the lesser citizens are those inside the conference room. The physical participant becomes anonymous."**

## Inside the Microsoft Teams Room

*The traditional business meeting has changed, but the transformation of your meeting spaces can be simple.*

We are witnessing a clear transformation of the meeting space as business returns to "normal," following the most challenging years of our lives. These rooms will become more active throughout the workday as businesses adjust office configurations to meet new safety protocols. Personal desks will be fewer and further apart to meet social distancing guidelines and encourage new means of employee interaction. A recent [Gartner study](#) supports the former point, with 36 percent of respondents anticipating that most employees will transition to shared seating arrangements, such as hot desking, over the next two years.

The meeting space will also be transformed into safe places for physical collaboration, which is considered a primary driver for workers to return to the office. These in-person meetings will also have to accommodate those who choose to work from home. With more businesses offering flexible schedules, many workers will split time between the business and home office. This creates the need for a hybrid meeting space that provides the same collaborative experience for physical and remote workers.

As Jimmy Vaughan, partner technical specialist, Microsoft Teams Room Systems explains, the hybrid meeting concept is not novel – the execution has just been uneven. "Remote meeting participants existed before the pandemic, but they were the lesser of citizens inside of the meeting," said Vaughan. "We were already researching ways to make remote participants equal to those in the room pre-lockdown. Before long, the majority of us were working remotely."

Interestingly, the script has flipped as physical meetings resume. "There is this feeling now that the lesser citizens are those inside the conference room," he said. "The physical participant becomes anonymous."

Microsoft has now leveled that playing field with its Teams Room solutions. This includes adding intelligent speakers that attribute live voice and transcriptions to each presenter. "The conference room knows that the presenter is there once he or she opts in with voice capability, and that person is no longer an anonymous participant," said Vaughan. "Teams can now assign tasks through (voice assistant) Cortana, using AI and machine learning. The conference room becomes part of the organization's digital workflow."



## An AI-Enhanced Experience

Microsoft introduced the Teams Room in early 2019 with the goal of extending the integrated meeting and calling solution into rooms of all sizes. The company has added more than 250 features for Teams Room customers over the past two years, making it the fastest-growing conferencing solution today.

"We want these shared spaces to be easy to use, purpose-built and native to Teams," said Vaughan. "We have developed software-driven technology, such as our intelligent speakers. We are also using AV and IT hardware inside of the room and building AI and machine learning applications around it all so that these shared experiences are also personable."

Microsoft has carefully selected audio and video equipment manufacturers as Teams Room partners, and many of these decisions strongly cater to the remote experience. This is especially true when it comes to audio, which has emerged as the greatest technical challenge for hybrid meetings. Vaughan cites Biamp, QSC and Shure as key certified partners on the audio side.

"Audio is moving air when it comes down to it, and the technology has to know what to pick up and what to ignore to be effective," said Vaughan. To that end, Microsoft has added AI-enabled background suppression technology that understands audibility levels in speech. "The crinkle of bags or papers will not be passed onto the meeting, as the AI recognizes the audio as something other than voice."

While Vaughan sees emerging technologies like beamforming microphones compelling, he believes they still struggle to understand how moving air reflects across varied meeting space environments. "We don't want to risk adding technologies that lessen the impact of the Teams Room experience," he continued. "That's why we are partnering only with best-of-breed equipment manufacturers and working with Diversified to integrate and enable Teams Room systems."

**"Meeting spaces have long been a black hole, and our customers can leverage analytics both within Teams and through Diversified that help them better understand their needs."**

## Holistic Meeting Room Management

Diversified was selected as a Certified Microsoft Partner because of their broad suite of meeting space services, according to Vaughan. This extends beyond integration and commissioning, with Vaughan pointing to Diversified's managed services and support as vital to the Teams Room experience.

"We provide the software to our OEM partners, and Diversified manages the installation, scalability and maintenance of these systems," he said. "Our Premium Teams Room service can help clients manage their meeting from a software perspective, but what happens when a switcher fails, or a cable goes bad? We need a partner like Diversified that can monitor those systems and dispatch a technician to the site to make repairs."

There are many instances where problems can be solved through remote troubleshooting, which has increasingly become a critical Teams Room service. Diversified offers this support for Teams Room customers through its Pulse managed service, which also provides the power of data analytics.

"Meeting spaces have long been a black hole, and our customers can leverage analytics both within Teams and through Diversified that help them better understand their needs," said Vaughan. "A facilities manager has clear information about room usage, and whether additional spaces are needed or not. Businesses can now make truly intelligent decisions rather than take someone's word for it. This is critical in the era of social distancing where real estate is already at a premium."

Together, Microsoft and Diversified provide Teams Rooms customers with a holistic management plan that is simple to execute, including specific licensing options and the Microsoft Teams Admin Center. Through this portal, administrators can quickly create group descriptions and classifications, and count all channels and team members, among other tasks. All AV and IT devices contributing to the Teams Room experience can be auto-enrolled and managed within that same portal.

"Our users can change settings, update systems and restart devices within that simplified Teams management workflow," said Vaughan. "The Premium service permits Microsoft to manage the entire meeting room experience, and open support tickets for Teams Room experts on standby. With Diversified's managed services and support on top of that, virtually any technical issue is solvable in short order."

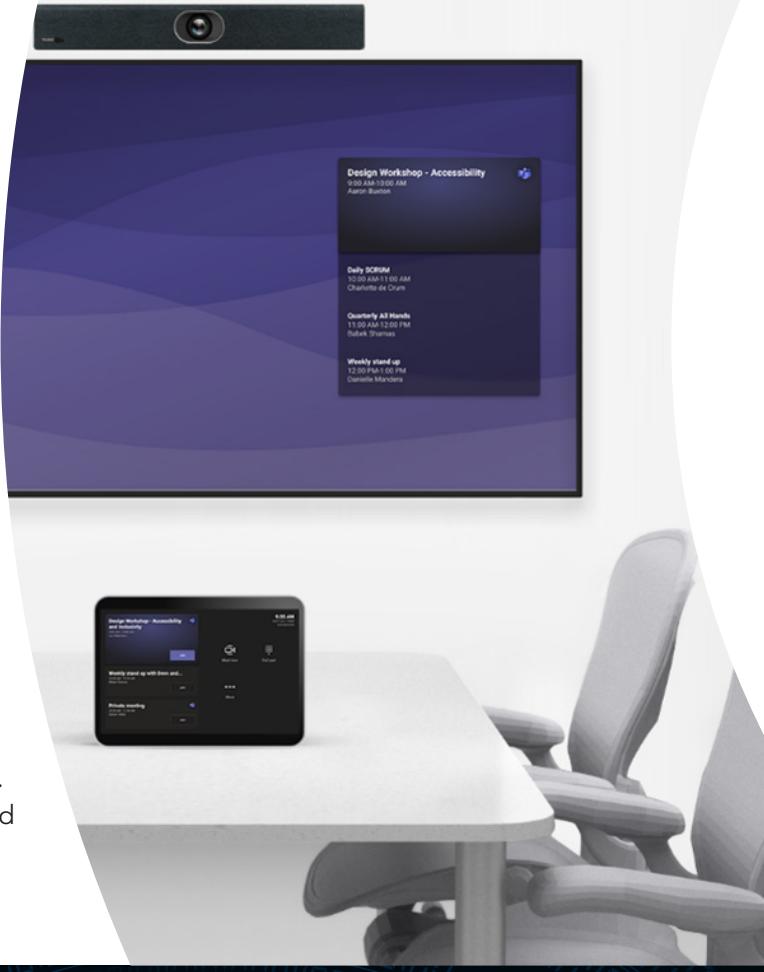


## Competitive Differentiators

Vaughan emphasizes that while there are several strong conferencing software options available, Microsoft Teams Room solutions offer several differentiating factors that stand out from competitive systems. Notably, video and audio services are included in the licensing, which he describes as "true collaboration," as well as Cortana's transcription service, which provides genuine meeting notes and action items.

Even with hundreds of features added in the past few years, there is plenty of innovation on the Teams Room roadmap including document sharing and intelligent cameras that immediately recognize meeting participant gestures.

"We need to keep innovating, especially since hybrid work models are here to stay, and we have the physical and remote attendee equally in mind," said Vaughan. "The development cycle has in some ways been accelerated through COVID, along with the speed of adoption. There are still pain points we are seeking to address, both in the AV world and with our end users. We are focused on making the technology even easier to use and understand for everyone even as new features are added."



## The Security Layer

Microsoft knows a thing or two about network security. With every new Teams Room feature that is developed comes intense scrutiny about how security is affected. "We want to automate as many functions as possible to make Teams easier for users," said Vaughan. "While we intend to push boundaries, we will never make sacrifices on security."

Microsoft has essentially replicated its trusted security processes across Microsoft Teams Room solutions. The benefit to users is clear, as Microsoft has a major leg up on the competition with its depth of security expertise. "Our customers know that their identities are always protected inside the Microsoft world," said Vaughan. "With Teams, they are simply moving that robust security into the conference room."

That said, there are differences in how Microsoft approaches security for its Teams Room solutions. That includes training users to look at the Teams Room as bigger than a typical Windows 10 PC. "We recommend that our customers add Teams to a segment of the network that directly faces the internet, and can only talk to Microsoft services," said Vaughan. "Teams itself is a cloud network, and you want to get to the Azure front door as quickly as possible. That is important because Microsoft's full Office365 network sits behind data centers positioned around the world."

The upside is that once the Teams user is through that front door, that user is fractions of a millisecond from being transferred around the network. "The delay is as close to zero inside of that network as you can get, because Microsoft has a comprehensive global fiber network," said Vaughan. "If the Teams Room is segmented, the Room systems will not be compromised if the organization's inside network is breached. This ensures that our customers will always be protected."

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## Key Considerations for Modern Meeting Room Success



# Key Considerations for Modern Meeting Room Success

What are you trying to accomplish with your meeting rooms? How will you support them?

Being able to address these questions grounds a strategy and helps ensure end users and their solutions partners make the right choices for technology and support services. Many variables can influence selection, including:

## CROSS PLATFORM CAPABILITY

Businesses will need to equip their offices with the appropriate technology to ensure that workers can continue to function as they have, as well as communicate with others that may use alternative conferencing platforms.

A business with Microsoft Teams Rooms will need to ensure native capability for staff to connect to Zoom Rooms. There is some provisioning that needs to happen for that interoperability, which is where a service provider like Diversified can lend expertise. The good news is that we have reached a point where that cross-platform interoperability is almost there out of the box. It is all about giving workers that one-touch ability to natively join a meeting, even when the platform choices differ across locations.

## HARDWARE CHOICES

Migrating to cloud-based technologies leads to hardware choices and whether clients stay with the same AV systems as they transition to the cloud. Many are transitioning to new vendors as their workforces adopt different UC platforms, in an effort to unify everything and strengthen interoperability. There are both advantages and disadvantages when it comes down to migrating from one vendor or platform to another, and we work with customers to help them understand what path will bring them the most long-term benefits.

## SECURITY

Security is of optimal concern as IT departments take more responsibility of meeting room management. IT managers have also looked at hardware devices, such as codecs or displays, being far more secure than a PC. As more PC devices enter the fray, they are being very cognizant when it comes to instituting their security policies across the entire meeting room infrastructure. Having control of all AV and IT devices through a singular management platform has lessened, though not entirely eliminated, the IT department's security concerns.



## BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE/MEETING (BYOD/BYOM)

BYOD is the practice of bringing one's personal device into the room to present, whereas BYOM is a more holistic view of marrying the entire meeting space infrastructure to a laptop, smartphone or even a Teams app. The presenter's device utilizes the camera, microphone, speakers, display and conferencing software to effectively launch and run a meeting. BYOM is especially attractive now as it means the presenter does not have to touch anything in the room. The meeting is automatically transferred.

## REMOTE MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

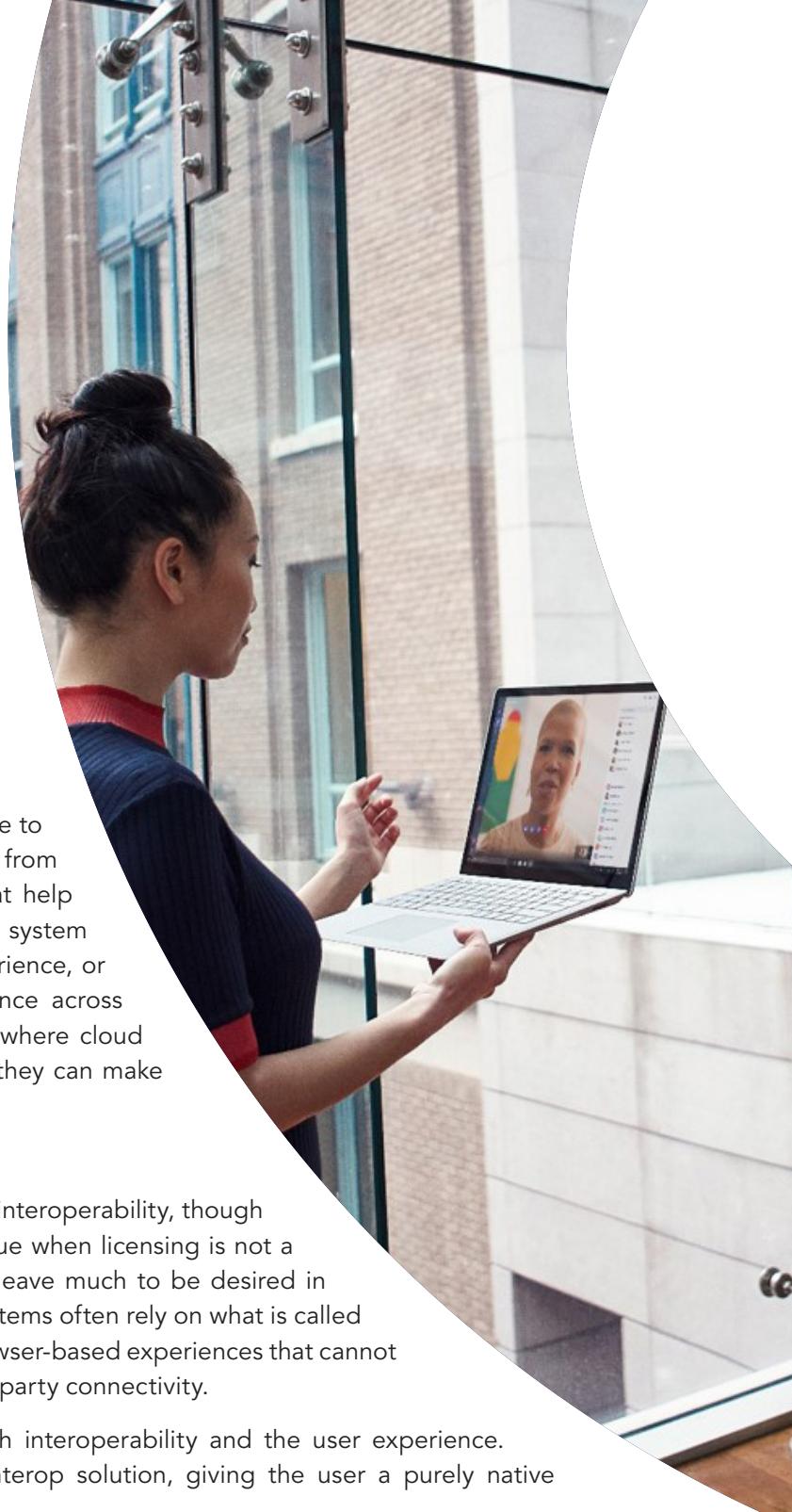
Cloud-based platforms like Teams are putting tools in place to make the management of these platforms more accessible from anywhere. This includes accessing data and analytics that help users understand everything from performance trends to system usage. It can be as simple as researching a bad call experience, or as intensive as monitoring device and system performance across many platforms and management infrastructures. This is where cloud technology becomes highly valuable to the customer, as they can make smart decisions based on clear information.

## INTEROPERABILITY

Most conferencing software solutions offer a base level of interoperability, though the user experience is often lacking. We find this to be true when licensing is not a requirement. Unlicensed systems are less expensive but leave much to be desired in feature set, performance and long-term viability. These systems often rely on what is called WebRTC for interoperability. These are essentially web browser-based experiences that cannot offer a truly native experience due to limitations with third-party connectivity.

Licensed systems will offer far more benefits across both interoperability and the user experience. Microsoft Teams, for example, offers its Cloud Video Interop solution, giving the user a purely native experience versus using web-based technologies.

One example of how this benefits the user is by providing the automated integration to initiate a Teams call by leveraging its backend native infrastructure. This ensures seamless interoperability across all hardware and software components used to conduct the meeting. That interoperability is substantially limited, or fully unavailable, when relying on a web-based technology lacking third-party standards.



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## Use Cases





#### USE CASE

## Rapid Meeting Room Deployment Solutions

The pandemic offered businesses time to revisit their meeting space initiatives, and the trend points to a thirst for more rooms of smaller sizes. Through this approach, businesses can better address the desire to imitate the traditional face-to-face meeting when using Microsoft Teams and other leading conferencing software to conduct hybrid meetings.

Diversified established its ViewPoint Xpress and FastFlex solutions specifically for these requirements. Xpress addresses the all-important area where budget and scale intersect. These cost-effective, pre-configured rooms help organizations quickly deploy hundreds of meeting spaces with consistency and expediency, while serving all collaboration needs for the modern IT meeting space. With no custom programming required, Xpress is an ideal entry-level collaboration solution that can be scaled globally, making it a perfect fit for businesses that prefer standardized meeting space designs across many locations.

ViewPoint FastFlex approaches meeting space flexibility from another perspective. These are ideal solutions for businesses that want budget-friendly meeting space solutions they can evolve over time. FastFlex starts with a baseline proprietary mounting kit with display and signal management technologies that is pre-built and ready for immediate deployment. These systems offer users more flexibility to adapt designs to specific needs for both

smaller huddle spaces and modestly-sized conference rooms through simple custom programming. FastFlex systems can be paired with any conferencing room system and will support room control and BYOM capabilities for wireless presentations.

#### Common Features and Benefits:

- Exceptional ease of use with unified user experiences
- Lower cost of ownership with less construction cost
- Simplified AV infrastructure for easy systems management
- Diverse AV equipment and UC software options
- Flexible display options for varied room sizes
- Leverages existing IT infrastructure
- Managed service options for remote monitoring and management

ViewPoint solutions support compelling use case options for room sizes of 2-12 people, including huddle spaces and conference rooms across a corporate campus, inside government facilities, and on hotel properties. All solutions include equipment (collaboration, control, audio and more) and a one-year Diversified support agreement, and are interoperable with Microsoft Teams among many other popular collaboration platforms. Learn more at [onediversified.com/viewpoint](http://onediversified.com/viewpoint).



#### USE CASE

## Protect Existing Conference Room Investments

Businesses are adopting smaller meeting spaces in alignment with new working patterns and safety protocols as workers return to offices. This has created a new dilemma for enterprises worldwide that invested in technologies for larger conference rooms pre-pandemic.

"Standardization was less of a concern before March 2020, and many organizations lacked policies when it came to conferencing software," said Blaine Brown, Director of Collaboration & Innovation, Diversified. "Employees would often sign up for separate conferencing platforms across different divisions or locations. This created a very segmented strategy, and with hybrid work models here to stay, businesses are concerned that they have not standardized on the right platform."

Diversified has developed a strategic consulting service to help businesses adapt their larger conference rooms for the changing workplace. Consultations focus on how customers can adopt intelligent migration strategies that eliminate costly and time-consuming "rip and replace" methodologies, and cost-efficiently enhance larger rooms with new AV and IT gear that support hybrid work models. The result is a unified strategy that extends the life of existing meeting spaces and protects the organization's pre-pandemic technology investments.

#### Feature and Benefits:

- Enables interoperability across different conferencing platforms
- Standardizes user interface and user experience
- Adapts to all budgets and number of conference rooms
- Establishes standardized hybrid meeting models company-wide
- Minimizes additional AV and IT technology investments
- Eliminates workplace disruptions from redesigning conferencing rooms
- Cloud migration options that leverage existing technologies
- Cost-efficiently strengthens existing systems with new collaboration technologies

Consultation engagements include a comprehensive portfolio of services that begin with an on-site evaluation of room size, structure, acoustics, sightlines and more. All consultations focus on ways to leverage existing AV and IT equipment with options to incorporate new equipment (collaboration, displays, control, audio), and a one-year Diversified support agreement. Strategies include integration with Microsoft Teams among other popular collaboration platforms.



#### SMALL TEAMS ROOMS

## Meeting Room Bundles

Our portfolio of pre-configured, ready to deploy video collaboration rooms ranges from small, rapid deployment solutions to full-featured options for medium to large rooms. Designed to support global technology standards for reliable and repeatable results wherever you need them, Diversified's ViewPoint meeting room bundles offer a solution for every aspect of your collaboration strategy.

### Xpress CT-6

ROOM SIZE: 2-6 PEOPLE



Samsung 55"



Crestron Touch Panel  
+ Huddly Camera



[GET PRICE](#)

### Xpress HT-6

ROOM SIZE: 2-6 PEOPLE



Samsung 55"



Logitech Meetup



[GET PRICE](#)

### Xpress LT-6

ROOM SIZE: 2-6 PEOPLE



Samsung 55"



Logitech Meetup



[GET PRICE](#)

### Meeting Room Support

The management of your collaboration spaces is equally as important as their initial setup. Diversified can help you with our workplace global services, including:

#### ASSURANCE

### Warranty, Service & Support

- Unlimited help desk support
- On-site troubleshooting within 1 business day\*
- Rapid initial response within 15 minutes
- Annual preventative maintenance

\*For locations within a 2-hour drive of a Diversified office.



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#### LARGE TEAMS ROOMS

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### Xpress CT-12

ROOM SIZE: 2-6 PEOPLE



LG 55"



Crestron Touch Panel  
+ Sound Bar



[GET PRICE](#)

### Xpress HT-12

ROOM SIZE: 6-12 PEOPLE



LG 65"



Logitech Rally Plus



[GET PRICE](#)

### Xpress LT-16

ROOM SIZE: 16 PEOPLE



LG 75"



Logitech Rally Bar +  
Tabletop Touch Panel



[GET PRICE](#)

## Meeting Room Support

The monitoring of your collaboration spaces is equally as important as their initial setup. Diversified can help you with our workplace global services, including:

#### PULSE

## Meeting Room Monitoring

- Monitoring of Meeting Rooms
- Proactive 24/7 Issue Resolution
- Dedicated customer experience manager
- Annual preventative maintenance



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## Working with a Trusted Microsoft Partner



## Unified Experiences

The office experience itself represents a broader definition today, as workers are no longer strictly confined to the corporate campus. This accentuates the need for a robust AV and unified communications (UC) strategy that can accommodate remote staff, and ensure they are essential contributors to the collaborative experience.

Microsoft defines the office experience for most of the business world. As meeting space designs become IT-centric, the discussions around migration strategies, deployment protocols and managed service offerings have accelerated. Businesses are relying on qualified design and integration partners to enact these visions that standardize their platforms across multiple rooms. This means that leading technology integration partners must also now thoroughly understand the user experience, collaboration systems, audio visual peripherals and IT systems, as well as the UC platforms that help physical and remote workers collaborate.

The Diversified approach addresses all trends and challenges for businesses, and is fortified through a broader, holistic view of today's IT meeting space. This strategy also addresses the core AV technologies that live on the network, while ensuring an ease of use that invites stronger collaboration and increased productivity.

**"Leading technology integration partners must also now thoroughly understand the user experience, collaboration systems, audio visual peripherals and IT systems, as well as the UC platforms that help physical and remote workers collaborate."**



## Meeting Room ReFresh with AVaaS

Businesses have always had budget on the mind when it comes to meeting space deployment and management. As the pandemic has further limited capital expenditures, businesses are recognizing that a strategic asset management plan for technology systems can effectively drive the efficient business outcomes they aim to achieve. Diversified developed its ReFresh Technology as a Service option specifically for this purpose.

ReFresh provides businesses with a way to reduce capital expenditures and improve operational efficiencies



across multiple meeting spaces. This as a Service model, paired with Diversified's Global Payment Solutions, provides customers with a predictive monthly expense by combining equipment, services and related costs into a singular financial plan. In addition to eliminating the cost and risk of ownership, each business can choose the hardware, software and complementary managed services to meet business objectives. Learn more about ReFresh and the entire Diversified managed services portfolio at [onediversified.com/managed-services](http://onediversified.com/managed-services).



The transition of AV technologies to the network also means that IT managers are increasingly responsible for these systems.

## The AV/IT Ecosystem

The foundational infrastructure of the meeting space evolved as AV and IT philosophies converged. Conversations are no longer purely about equipment choices; they are about choosing the right platform for an organization's workflow and communications. This leads to higher-level, holistic conversations about how businesses can leverage their IT and wireless infrastructure to replicate common design strategies across multiple meeting spaces, from the smallest huddle spaces to the largest conference rooms and auditoriums. The result is a true IT-focused meeting space that leverages the robust security practices and management workflows of modern IT networks, along with today's best-of-breed AV technologies and services.

AV in the meeting space has also evolved beyond the standard display and projector. Meeting spaces now frequently incorporate matrix, presentation and wallplate switchers as well as PTZ cameras to support video. Audio requirements are amplified to better support hybrid meetings, with Digital Signal Processing (DSPs), microphones and speakers working in concert to optimize acoustic environments. As businesses embrace BYOM and touch-free practices, USB/USB-C and even Bluetooth technologies are an integral element of the meeting space design, supporting wireless transport between a host of peripherals.

AV over IP adoption has brought these core technologies into the IT infrastructure. Businesses can now more easily replicate their meeting space designs across the building or campus and standardize on a common platform.

The transition of AV technologies to the network also means that IT managers are increasingly responsible for these systems. This brings the conversation back to ease of use, as IT managers favor products that can reliably operate on the network with minimal maintenance or attention. Security concerns are also becoming a vital part of the conversation, as these lesser known technologies become part of the IT infrastructure.

These are all common tasks for today's technology integrator, and Diversified has carefully devised a strategic approach that covers all bases. Businesses have a finite period to modernize their meeting spaces as workers return. Diversified works with each business to understand and develop initial design plans, deliver a comprehensive proof of concept, and make intelligent technology decisions for each use case. Following implementation comes the wrap-around services and support to extend the life of the investment, which can include remote monitoring, room analytics, quality assurance and AV as a Service (AVaaS) plans for equipment procurement.





**"Security and support are equally important to the IT-centric collaboration architecture today, and a critical element of Diversified's work as a Certified Microsoft Partner when it comes to the customer experience."**

## Choose Your Service

Diversified's experience in designing and equipping modern IT meeting spaces has resulted in several important strategic alliances, one of which is their status as a Certified Microsoft Partner. Many businesses operating Microsoft computing platforms have elected to modernize their meeting spaces as Microsoft Teams Rooms, which requires an IT-friendly AV solution for seamless interoperability with Teams and BYOM platforms.

Service, security and support are equally important to the IT-centric collaboration architecture today, and a critical element of Diversified's work when it comes to the customer experience. Businesses want to understand how their systems are being leveraged and protected, and to what degree. They also want the confidence that their systems are performing as advertised, with a watchful eye to troubleshoot and reconcile technical issues prior to the start of each day. Diversified has developed a managed service ecosystem to address these emerging business requirements. One in particular – Pulse – directly addresses the customer experience for the modern IT space.

## Achieve Predictable Business Outcomes

Pulse takes a proactive approach through a proven support structure that ensures client success. Pulse helps businesses achieve predictable outcomes with remote managed services that monitor, manage, report and analyze system performance. This lays the groundwork for remote management and diagnostics from Diversified's 24/7 Global Service Center, with a proactive and responsive approach to identify and resolve issues before business operations are impacted. Pulse is also a core component of ViewPoint Xpress, one of Diversified's range of globally scalable, rapid deployment meeting room services for modern IT meeting spaces.

Pulse importantly embraces data analytics to help businesses understand how systems perform over time, monitor meeting room and device usage, and efficiently manage replacement cycles and upgrades. Leveraging this highly detailed and granular data

establishes a new paradigm for proactive insight that helps businesses improve operational efficiency and ROI across the technology ecosystem. As with Diversified's rapid deployment meeting room services, Pulse can be deployed quickly at scale around the world to support AV and IT systems and processes across any number of meeting spaces.

The meeting space continues to be a rapidly evolving element of the AV universe. Moving forward, we envision the integration of more IT and IoT technologies that bring occupancy sensing, gesture recognition and voice control into the Microsoft Teams Room. These will perfectly complement the BYOM and touch-free solutions that have quickly become commonplace in collaborative environments, while helping businesses create a quality meeting experience in and out of the office. Learn more [onediversified.com/pulse](http://onediversified.com/pulse).

Discover how Diversified can help plan, integrate and manage Microsoft Teams Rooms solutions for your organization by visiting [onediversified.com/teams](http://onediversified.com/teams).



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