Is the Huddle Room Here to Stay or a Passing Fad?

I think huddle rooms are here to stay for two very different reasons. First, the cost of real estate has forced many large corporations to move to an open floor plan, with no cubicle walls or dividers, in order to maximize space; huddle rooms offer the ability for staff to have quick, ad hoc meetings without disturbing their co-workers. Second, generational influences are changing meeting culture away from long, formal meetings, which are rigidly scheduled and more monologue oriented, to more frequent but shorter meetings with much higher levels of interactivity and more dialogue.

—*Rob Balgley, CEO, Mersive*

Huddle rooms have been developing over the past 15 years or so. Having started as a response to the need for quick (less than 20 minutes) small group meeting space in flexible and open office environments, the huddle room has evolved to include technology designed to offer fast access to materials, research and even off-site employees and clients. Research findings support the idea that small group collaboration allows for better problem-solving skills and more diverse and developed solutions. I suspect the huddle room will continue to evolve with the needs and technologies of those using them.

—*Gina Sansivero, Director of Educational Sales, FSR*

Recently, we've seen a shift in the size and design of corporate meeting spaces. In the past, the focus was on large conference rooms loaded with collaboration equipment, but the problem was a limited number of people had access to the room. Today, the trend is to provide smaller meeting spaces that will offer more people access to collaboration tools. Products like interactive white boards, portable video conferencing systems and interactive projectors have grown in demand to support these huddle rooms. I see the use of huddle rooms growing in popularity because people attend meetings with various portable devices that all need to be connected and displayed quickly and easily.

—*Paul Foschino, Sr. Manager, Visual Communication Group, Ricoh Americas*

Huddle rooms are here to stay. Teams are more distributed than ever with a heightened need for distance collaboration. Office spaces are shrinking as more employees are working from home with personal collaboration solutions on their desktop and mobile devices. The result is a need to make better use of small rooms and public spaces for the people collaborating on site. With the emergence of software-based group solutions, like Vidyo's, that run on PCs and leverage low cost, high-quality USB cameras, it is now affordable to video-enable all of these small collaboration spaces or huddle rooms. Enterprises are thinking differently about the makeup of a group solution for huddle rooms or conference spaces and realizing the cost savings and efficiencies of video enabled huddle spaces.

—*Mark Noble, VP of Strategic Marketing, Vidyo*

A cultural and technological paradigm shift has occurred, and there's no going back. Workers expect to walk into a room and instantly share content from personal devices. Crestron AirMedia was uniquely designed to provide convenience for presenters and maintain network security for IT managers. While the number of meeting spaces increases, the size of technical support teams remains the same. This makes presentation solutions that directly connect to enterprise-level software for asset management, monitoring and helpdesk essential. The latest 3-Series DMPS communicates with Crestron Fusion without any custom programming, so you can handle the complexities of huddle space technology.

—*Tom Barnett, Director of Global Marketing Communications, Crestron*

Here to stay. In fact, they have been around for a while, so the "fad" is that more companies are realizing the benefits of adding more huddle rooms rather than having just a few large meeting rooms, which are always booked even if it's for three or four people. The increasing demand for technologies that suit the work flow of a huddle room concept support "here to stay," including Barco ClickShare and small-format, high-resolution displays and projectors.

—*Neil Wittering, Product Marketing Manager, Barco*

The huddle room is here to stay. Companies are trying to work smarter in today's current economic climate, and huddle rooms give them affordable collaboration spaces that allow users to BYOD. In this instance, anyone can engage with a simple to use system that enhances idea development. According to InfoComm, "Businesses operating smarter since the recession, plus the exponential growth of mobile devices, have led to the current dynamic—AV integrators report that office designs increasingly have huddle spaces included in the architects' blueprints. In other words, the huddle room has quickly become an institution of American office culture—like the water cooler, and Monday morning quarterbacks."

—*Mike Luttrell, Sales Application Engineer, Peerless-AV*