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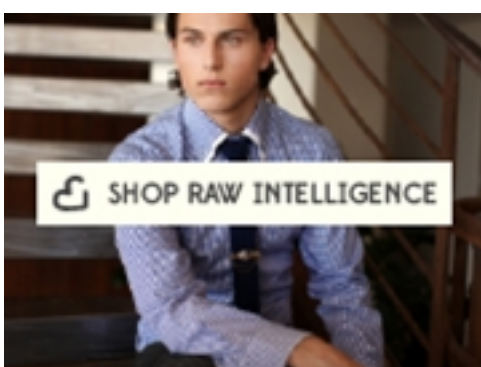
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Green Businesses Employ Video- and Teleconferencing

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Business travel can be a big expense for businesses of all shapes and sizes. Whether it's travel by car, train, bus, or plane, the greenhouse gas emissions from business travel also have an impact on business [energy consumption](#). Teleconferencing is a fabulous solution for solving these problems while increasing the productivity and happiness of your employees.

Teleconferencing goes by many names: Virtual meetings, e-meetings, telemeetings, video conferencing, web conferencing, audio conferencing, and even telepresence. Whatever you call them, these formats are all ways of describing a shift from in-person get-togethers for business purposes to using technology to meet without being physically present.

There are all types of virtual meetings today, as you'll see from this list:

- **Conference calls** with audio only, which is sometimes called audio conferencing. This can include web conferencing using online telephony systems, again with audio only.
- **Video conferencing** which includes visual elements such as videos, slide shows, and so forth.
- **Data conferencing** where computer screens are shared for maximum collaboration or training effectiveness.

Green businesses are using virtual meetings more and more today, and seeing many benefits as a result. At Hearts, we host telemeetings every single day – just one more way we're [working to be as carbon neutral as possible](#).

Quick Guide: Teleconferencing and other Virtual Meeting Costs

- **Business travel's size:** Americans take more than 405 business trips over long distances every year, which is 16% of all long distance travel in the US.^[i] Of this energy expenditure, 240 billion passenger miles are logged by air, which costs businesses \$175 billion every year.^[ii]
- **Financial benefits of teleconferencing:** Businesses that choose video conferencing over in-person meetings save on travel costs and increase employee productivity and retention, all of which will have a positive impact on the bottom line. According to the Carbon Disclosure Project, economy benefits in both the US and the UK combined would amount to \$19 billion by 2020 if 10,000 telepresence units were deployed. In fact, the return on investment can be as short as 15 months.^[iii]
- **Greenhouse gas savings with teleconferencing:** By avoiding ground or air travel for business meetings, teleconferencing could have a big impact on greenhouse gas emissions from day to day green business operations, though estimates of the climate emissions savings from telemeetings are varied. According to one study, CO2 emissions could be cut by 5.5 million metric tons with 10,000 telepresence deployments in the US and the UK.^[iv] That's like removing more than 1 million passenger vehicles from the road.^[v] When combined with other efficiency improvements, teleconferencing could reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 500 metric tons of CO2 equivalent missions by 2020 – a hundredfold savings similar to removing 100 million passenger vehicles.^[vi]

Take Action! Get Started with Virtual Meetings

1. **Estimate your savings:** Try out a business travel savings calculator like that from [AT&T](#) where you can input how many employees you have, how many travel every year, and what your savings will be if you choose teleconferencing over in-person meetings.
2. **Consider all types of virtual meetings:** Don't just use teleconferencing for your inter-office or inter-departmental meetings. Make use of virtual meeting technologies for webinars, training sessions, interviews and auditions, medical consultations, press conferences, or even special events like annual conferences.
3. **Talk to your superiors:** If you work in a big business, you may need to consult with the higher-ups to ensure they're okay with the avoidance of in-person meetings, especially if you're talking about important clients. Get management buy-in before making any strategic moves that could have consequences for you.
4. **Get the software you'll need:** Likely your teleconferencing sessions will require some type of software. Check out [CNET's video conferencing resources](#) – both free and purchase options. They're a trusted source for downloads that actually work.
5. **Obtain teleconference equipment:** Depending on the type of virtual meeting you plan to host, you'll likely need some hardware, too. Talk to your IT department (if you've got one) to get equipped with things like computers, virtual whiteboards, telephones, microphones, webcams or video cameras, speakers or earphones, monitors or projectors, and data transfer equipment.
6. **Offset the rest:** When you can't avoid business travel, offset those carbon emissions with a reputable organization like [Carbonfund.org](#).

Dig Deeper: Green Business Travel and Teleconferencing

- Information Technology (IT) energy savings go well beyond video conferencing. Find out more about how beneficial smart technology can be in our modern society with the [Outline for the First Global IT Strategy for CO2 Reductions](#) report from the World Wildlife Fund.
- See what's going on in the [Telepresence Revolution](#) through the Carbon Disclosure Project.
- There are many other ways to green your business travel and corporate meetings. Check out resources from the US EPA on [Green Meeting Initiatives](#) as well as the [Green Meeting Industry Council](#).

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