

Competitive Profile

VuLink™ 322 vs. Tandberg 500



Positioned to Win

The VuLink Set-top systems place Gentner Communications squarely at the heart of the latest developments in video conferencing, while offering a unique blend of "appliance" and "PC-centric" technology that addresses diverse needs without sacrificing performance or functionality. On one hand, the VuLink offers the reliability and ease of use of a set-top video appliance, complete with simple dialing capabilities, powerful one-piece remote control unit, flexible remote camera models, and robust network management through its VuConsole remote management software. At the same time, the VuLink provides high performance PC and data conferencing capabilities through the popular Windows CE operating system, along with an integrated Internet Explorer® browser for accessing web or Microsoft Office content during a call and Microsoft Outlook® integration through its VuMeeting™ software. Truly an advanced, best-of-breed product, the VuLink provides resellers and integrators a new, differentiated opportunity for delivering total solutions to their customers.

The Tandberg 500 falls on the "appliance" side of video conferencing, with no architectural support for PC capabilities other than a single RS-232 port. It offers some unique proprietary features for which it deserves some credit, such as its SoftMux and built-in Streaming capabilities. But is the price difference worth it when one considers that it is essentially a "talking heads" video conferencing unit that lacks even basic PC capabilities? The entry-level 500 model costs more than the 128Kbps VuLink 322 without significant additional value, lacking the value and price/performance ratio available from the VuLink. Why pay for a proprietary operating system and expensive options that one may not need? The Windows CE-based VuLink can be adapted easily to international or vertical, user-oriented applications with a minimum of effort, whereas the Tandberg 500 lacks any type of Software Developer's Kit. For the customer looking for a complete solution at unquestionable value, Gentner's VuLink 322 is the obvious winner.

Similarities

ITU Standards	Connectivity	Audio/Video	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.320, H.323 • H.261, H.263 Video coding • H.281 FECC • Annex D • T.120 • G.711, G.722, G.728 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethernet LAN • ISDN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 fps max frame rate • Acoustic Echo Cancellation • PTZ Camera included • VGA support • Noise reduction and automatic gain control • Two video inputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand held remote • Auto SPID detect • Remote management • Picture in Picture (PIP) • VCR support • One-year warranty

Major Differences

Gentner VuLink 322	Capability/Feature	Tandberg 500
Windows CE	Operating System	Proprietary
PCMCIA card slots for attaching hard drives or other devices to system PLUS PC functionality working with LAN-based files	PC capabilities	Presentations only through RS-232 or LAN connections
384K H.320 and H.323	Transmission Rates	384K H.320, 768K H.323
Integrated web browser for slide send; MS Office/web content	Presentations support	Embedded web server only which limits presentation capabilities
Yes	Built-in VGA Support	No
Yes	Dual Monitor Support	No
VuMeeting option for integration with MS Outlook Express	Scheduling	Not available

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Other Unique Differences

Gentner VuLink 322	Capability/Feature	Tandberg 500
Yes	Remote Camera System	Not available
Not available	Streaming video/H.331 broadcast video	Yes
Yes	Keyboard	Not available
2	RS-232 ports	1
Yes	Power Save Mode	Not available
Not available	V.35 Network interface	Yes (as priced option)
Not available	IP Precedence	Yes
Yes	G.723 audio	Not available
Not available	G.722.1 audio	Yes
Yes	Video setting adjustment	Not available

Gentner Value Difference

Gentner VuLink 322	Capability/Feature	Tandberg 500
\$4,799 MSRP	Base System	\$4,990 MSRP
\$399	Integrated scheduling via VuMeeting	Not available
\$249	Network management	Expensive option per unit monitored
\$5,447 MSRP (single worldwide price with no international markup)	Total Value Difference	\$4,990 + NETWORK MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE, intl. markups

SALES TIPS

Limited Capabilities--Tandberg features tend to take a "keep the video system like a phone" approach. This makes the user interface fairly simple to use for end users. It also limits the capabilities of the system and doesn't allow for customization based on application requirements.

Proprietary Bias--Many of Tandberg's "value add" features such as SoftMux are proprietary and only work on its own systems. Where's the value when one places calls to *industry-standard* systems from other vendors? Gentner's use of Windows CE shows an understanding of the value of standard operating systems (development capabilities plus maintenance support). Tandberg's proprietary operating system leaves little flexibility.

Applications Approach--Gentner's approach is to add audio/video to applications; Tandberg's approach is to focus on audio and video. Everything about Gentner's product architecture focuses on data conferencing, from the ability to share Microsoft Office software with a remote site to the ability to use the PCMCIA card slots to add flash cards or hard drives to expand the product. Where is Tandberg's focus on applications?

SDK--Gentner's architecture avoids locking its partners into a hardware design. By providing an SDK, Gentner offers greater flexibility for developers and integrators to customize the VuLink for specific applications. Tandberg lacks any sort of SDK or flexibility for integrators and developers.