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How to Choose a Business Projector

Selecting the right business projector is an important decision. You'll want to choose a projector that's best suited to your needs without paying for more than you need. Because there are a number of varying factors involved in having the right projector for a given situation, it's worth taking some time to understand the most important features in a business projector. We hope to make your shopping for a business projector easier with the following step-by-step decision guide.

1. Consider your presentation environment

Will you be using your projector with a few people in small meeting rooms, or will you be displaying images in large conference rooms or auditoriums? Will the room you use the projector in be dark with the lights off, or will there be some ambient window light? The answers to these questions will determine how much brightness, or how many lumens, your projector should put out. You will pay more for a projector with higher lumens output.

Your brightness requirements depend on your projecting environment.

1,000-1,500 lumens	1,500-2,500 lumens	2,500-3,500 lumens	3,500-5,000 lumens	5,000-10,000 lumens
Small meeting rooms with minimal ambient light	Meeting rooms with some ambient light	Larger conference rooms, smaller church sanctuaries	Large installation projector meeting rooms with some ambient light	Auditoriums, audiences of 100 or more under bright lights

2. Determine the right resolution

Resolution refers to the number of pixels or dots that make up an image. The higher the number of pixels, the sharper your images will be. There are different levels of projector resolution appropriate for different purposes. As with lumens output, you will pay more for a projector with higher resolution capabilities. That's why it makes sense to choose a level of projector resolution based on your business goals and requirements.

- SVGA projector resolution (800 x 600) is a good choice for an affordable projector with requirements to show simple graphics and presentations.

- XGA projector resolution (1024 x 768) will deliver finer detail for business presentations with spreadsheets, videos and more sophisticated graphics.

- SXGA projector resolution (1280 x 1024) is suitable for high-end workstation applications and used primarily for engineering and CAD/CAM applications where acute resolution of small images is important.

3. Know your connections

A projector's image sharpness also depends on the type of cable connections that come with the projector. Each type of cable treats the video signal differently. A projector may have one or more of the following types of cables.

- **Composite Cables.** These are the most common type of cables, which come with standard VCR and stereo equipment. Typically, they are color-coded: red, white, and yellow. Composite cables produce the lowest-quality picture image.

- **S-Video Cables.** S-video cables differ from composite cables in that they split video signal into two different components: luminance and chrominance. S-video cables produce sharper images than composite cables. Nearly all projectors featuring DLP® technology, which produces rich, sharp colors, will have at least one composite and one S-video connection.

- **Component Cables.** Component video provides a superior image over composite or S-video connections. Although they resemble composite cables, the difference is that a component cable splits the signal in three.

- **Digital Visual Interface (DVI).** DVI is a connection type designed specifically for high-bandwidth, all-digital signals that are anticipated to become the industry standard for HDTV control boxes. While DVI is relatively new, watch for more DVI-compatible projectors coming soon.

4. Choose DLP Technology for a better return on investment

Today's projectors come with one of two types of video technology: LCD (liquid crystal display) or DLP (digital light processing). The newer of the two, DLP, has been shown to have greater picture reliability and improved long-term performance.

The image that a projector using DLP technology produces is virtually immune to degradation. Independent testing has shown that DLP projectors exhibit consistent picture reliability over time, while LCD projectors will develop image degradation. For more information on this study, click here.

Projectors with DLP technology are comparably priced to LCD projectors, and with their plug-and-play features, they can be set up in minutes. Another positive feature with DLP projectors is that they come with both standard (4:3) and wide screen (16:9) "native" resolutions. Projectors with the all-digital DLP chip are compatible with everything from laptops to digital cameras and gaming consoles. DLP technology is also the leader in lightweight projectors.

5. Look for other important projector features

There are a number of other projector features you should be aware of when selecting a business projector. These include:

- **Ease of set-up.** Many business projectors, including those made by InFocus, provide easy plug-and-play operation with one simple cord connection.

- **Brightness uniformity**. Brightness uniformity is the percentage of brightness projected from edge to edge and corner to corner of your image. A uniformity rating of 85% or better will give you the most consistent images from your meeting room projector.

- **Networkability.** The ability to network your meeting room projector provides you more flexibility in projecting files from a location, along with added security.

- **Wireless remote control**. InFocus remote controls have integrated laser pointers to make presenting even easier.

- **Short-throw lens**. A meeting room projector with a short throw-lens will allow you to create a big picture in a small space.

- **Projector placement flexibility.** Projectors with "digital keystone correction" will correct any video distortion if you are forced to place the projector from an angle. You'll get a straight, normal picture even if you are not able to place the projector squarely in front of your screen. "Lens shift" is another feature that allows you to raise or lower the lens and picture without any props.

- **Ultra-mobile wireless solutions**. Looking to travel light? Now you can perform wireless projection from your mobile phone or PDA using InFocus' new Impatica ShowMate. Simply attach the ShowMate wireless accessory to the VGA port of any projector and your handheld delivers your PowerPoint presentation wirelessly using Bluetooth technology. With your SmartPhone or PDA presentation software, you won't even need your laptop!

Now that you know the features that are most important to your presentation style, audience and environment, you should be better prepared to select a business projector that will give you the best results and satisfaction. Choosing the right business projector is an investment that can pay back in quality performance for many years to come.