Video conferencing shrinks the globe

Vital Images uses technology to help workers be more productive in global meetings without a hardware investment.

> "Lacking video capabilities, overseas employees felt left out of online meetings. Now it's as though they're across the table."
>
> *– Eric Anderson, IT Infrastructure Manager, Vital Images Inc.*

As the name implies, Vital Images Inc. is all about the visual. This subsidiary of Toshiba Medical Systems Group develops software that creates 2D, 3D, and 4D images of the human body, using computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance (MR) data. Radiologists, cardiologists, oncologists, and other clinical specialists use these visualizations to make fast, confident decisions that contribute to better patient outcomes.

Challenges

- Empower remote workers to participate fully in a variety of video and web conferencing meetings
- Support a wide range of video systems and devices
- Implement a solution with limited budget and IT staff

With such a visual focus, it's no surprise that Vital Images' employees rely heavily on video collaboration by Cisco TelePresence® technology for meetings across the United States. However, interactions with Toshiba subsidiaries around the world were less productive. Many of these overseas subsidiaries lacked a hardware-based endpoint for videoconferencing, or had one from a different manufacturer that was incompatible with the Cisco® infrastructure.

The only viable solution for remote meetings was audio conferencing, a solution that proved to be problematic. Without visual cues, U.S.-based employees had difficulty understanding heavily accented colleagues in

Case Study | Vital Images Inc.

Size: 300 employees   Location: Minnetonka, Minnesota   Industry: Medical software

Scotland, Japan, and other foreign locations. They felt that they were not getting a full and accurate understanding of the interaction.

Vital Images could solve this problem by buying a multipoint control unit (MCU), but the cost was prohibitive. Vital Images needed a cost-effective, reliable solution for users to join web conferencing meetings (one-on-one discussions, web seminars, sales meetings, and even remote support sessions) from anywhere in the world, using any device with a webcam and an Internet connection.

Cisco CMR Cloud enables workers anywhere in the world to collaborate using any video device.

Solutions

- Consistent, business-quality videoconferencing across different systems and mobile and desktop devices

- Cloud-based video bridge using existing Cisco infrastructure with no investment in on-premises equipment
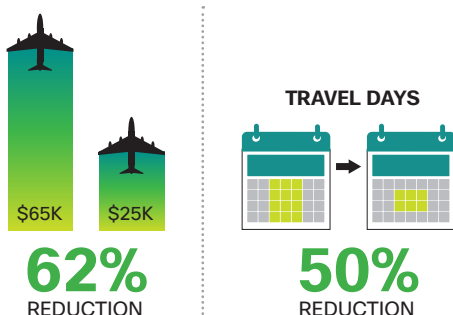
Existing Cisco infrastructure does the trick

When Vital Images learned how Cisco Collaboration Meeting Rooms (CMR) Cloud could be integrated with a variety of video manufacturers to enable video conferencing as a cloud service, the company said yes. That choice has paid off in a number of ways.

Travel time and costs are lower

Flying five or more workers halfway around the world is expensive (up to US$5000 per employee), to say nothing of unproductive travel days and life disruptions. Instead of spending days on airplanes, overseas attendees can now participate fully in global sales summits using any video-enabled device and not have to leave home.

For its annual sales conference, Vital Images reduced airline expenses from $65,000 to $25,000 and cut employee travel days in half.

$65K $25K

62%
REDUCTION

TRAVEL DAYS

50%
REDUCTION

Costly hardware investment is avoided

Cisco CMR Cloud addressed one of Vital Images' primary goals: avoiding the purchase of an expensive multipoint control unit (MCU). The Cisco solution fell into Vital Images' operating budget and allows employees at headquarters in Minnesota to use existing conferencing systems to collaborate visually with customers and partners in Asia, Europe, and other areas of the world. Those remote users join meetings using a variety of video systems and personal devices without installing a client, which eliminates frustrating delays waiting for downloads. With the Cisco cloud service, Vital Images can scale its use of Cisco CMR Cloud as business requirements change.

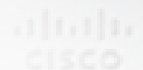## Legacy devices pose no problem

Because of Cisco CMR Cloud interoperability, Vital Images employees can now easily collaborate with other Toshiba subsidiaries through any conferencing system. The communication barriers are dropping because the experience is consistent and reliable and no longer relies on specific devices.

When cultures collide, seeing is believing

Overseas conferences go more smoothly with Cisco CMR Cloud because participants can hear and see each other clearly, which is particularly helpful when trying to untangle a thick Scottish brogue or straining to understand nonnative speakers.

Recruiting is more effective

Staffing global teams requires global participation in interviews, but evaluating talent over the phone can be tricky. Thanks to Cisco CMR Cloud, overseas workers now conduct face-to-face interviews more easily with prospective employees, often making the difference between a superstar hire and a costly mistake.

Results	• Travel expenses were reduced by $40,000, and travel days went from 20 to 10 for quarterly sales summit
	• More remote employees, partners, and customers participate in video conferencing sessions using different video-enabled devices from wherever they are located
	• Cloud-based service scales to match changes in business needs

Demand is driving broader acceptance and more savings

The initial rollout to the CEO, director of sales operations, and other executives was an unqualified success. Now IT staff can extend Cisco CMR Cloud to others and add to the time and cost savings already realized. Vital Images is working closely with Cisco to continue to increase system utilization as employees, partners, and customers come to see video collaboration as an everyday productivity tool, not an occasional alternative.

More information

To find out more about Cisco CMR Cloud, visit www.cisco.com/go/cmrcloud.

Products & services

Web conferencing
• Cisco Collaboration Meeting Rooms (CMR) Cloud
• Cisco WebEx Meeting Center

Videoconferencing
Cisco TelePresence Server

Unified Communications
• Cisco Unified Communications Manager
• Cisco Expressway