Healthcare Provider Achieves Fast ROI with Business Video

Advocate Health Care shares best practices using Cisco video solutions, driving innovation while reducing costs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Advocate Health Care
Industry: Healthcare
Location: Oak Brook, Illinois
Number of Employees: 32,000 employees

Business Challenge
· Collaborate more effectively with geographically dispersed associates
· Reduce travel time and improve employee productivity to better serve patients
· Enable quicker assimilation of new acquisition targets

Network Solution
· Cisco TelePresence 1300 and 1500 systems enable face-to-face video collaboration
· Cisco Digital Signs offer consistent, cost-effective messaging across entire healthcare network
· Cisco Services customize unique TelePresence solution for boardroom and provide on-demand technical support

Business Results
· Accelerated executive decision making with more frequent face-to-face communication
· Achieved ROI after single high-impact TelePresence meeting by identifying opportunities to better manage medical device costs
· Shared best practices across organization and maximized specialists' expertise

Challenge

As the largest healthcare system in the state of Illinois, Advocate Health Care serves more than 3.7 million patients through a network of 12 hospitals and 250 care sites. To accommodate this expansive customer base, the company employs 32,000 associates, including 6000 affiliated physicians and 9000 nurses, all spread across metropolitan Chicago and central Illinois. As a result of its outstanding systemwide clinical performance, the company is today recognized as one of the top healthcare systems in the country.

As Advocate Health Care continued to pursue its plans for aggressive growth, the leadership team recognized the need to undertake a video collaboration initiative. "With many of our sites scattered throughout Chicagoland and central Illinois, the only way our geographically dispersed teams could work together face-to-face was by driving to a remote office or healthcare location," says Rance Clouser, Vice President of IS Support Services and Communication at Advocate Health Care. "That's why one of our primary objectives was to integrate an immersive video solution into our infrastructure. We wanted to reduce, if not eliminate, travel and make better use of our employees' time."

When Advocate Health Care decided to deploy Cisco TelePresence® 1300 systems to three of its remote sites, the company's executive management team requested an additional deployment in the corporate office's boardroom. Unfortunately, this request posed a challenge for Clouser and team, because they soon realized that a standard Cisco® TelePresence 1300 setup would not work in this location. "Not only is this room much larger than a typical telepresence room, it also had to be multipurpose, since we use it for anything from 60-person meetings to social gatherings," he says.

The team knew that the company's video-based collaboration would only grow, and that bringing in a different type of technology to accommodate this room would add unnecessary complexity to the video network.
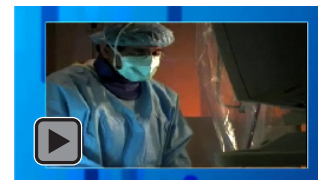
"We held a single TelePresence meeting for 20 spine surgeons to discuss implantable devices. I'm certain that we paid for our entire TelePresence investment with that one meeting."

Dr. Lee Sacks
Executive Vice President and
Chief Medical Officer
Advocate Health Care

"It was important for us to identify a workable solution in our boardroom," says Clouser. "We needed to retain the integration and elegance of Cisco TelePresence while also meeting the boardroom's unique needs."

In addition to meeting the immediate needs of the boardroom, the Advocate team knew that it had to think about the organization's long-term video approach as well. "We keep growing as a company," says Clouser. "Therefore, we need to make sure that our TelePresence investment continues to grow along with us. At the same time, we wanted to add additional video solutions that would allow us to communicate broad, consistent corporate messages across an increasingly dispersed network of locations."

Solution

Clouser discussed these challenges with his account representative at Cisco. Under her recommendation, Advocate Health Care turned to Cisco Services for help in designing a unique telepresence solution. "We realized that, with the complexity of this room, our A/V partner would find it challenging to do alone," says Bruce Smith, senior vice president and chief information officer at Advocate Health Care. "We've learned through experience that it's often best to listen to people who've done it before. That's why we decided to turn to Cisco, the experts in these technologies."

And experts are indeed what the company got. "Cisco flew out one of their key individuals in telepresence technology to work with us," says Clouser. "The entire Cisco team really took on an advisory role throughout the process. Being a well-recognized organization, we weren't in a position to risk a less-than-perfect outcome. Cisco understood that and gave us their top-notch people to make sure that everything worked correctly."

A Custom Solution for a Fully Integrated Video Experience

Working closely with Cisco Services and the Cisco account team, the Advocate Health Care team shared its requirements, both from a business and technical standpoint. The Cisco Services experts led Advocate Health Care through the planning and design stages, which resulted in a decision to use a Cisco TelePresence 500 system. Instead of the company's standard TelePresence 1300 setup with a single, 65-inch high-definition monitor displaying video, the boardroom would use a high-definition projector to display video on a projection screen, which would have interplay with remote sites. Four 65-inch monitors would be mounted on the walls to display content, and three additional cameras would be deployed to provide a more dynamic video experience.

Within a few weeks' time, the boardroom's TelePresence system was ready to go live. Advocate Health Care's executive management team was eager to test out the solution, and scheduled a meeting with two of its other sites. "When they say immersive video, they mean immersive video," says Clouser. "There is very much a 'wow' factor for first-time users." In addition to the lifelike video quality of Cisco TelePresence, the fact that the technology is easy enough to use without the help of IT is an added benefit for Clouser and his team.

Digital Signage for Consistent, Cost-Effective Messaging

As Advocate Health Care continues to grow, the organization finds it increasingly important to distribute consistent messages throughout its many facilities, whether to patients, physicians, or staff. "Not so long ago, we would often make major announcements by creating hard-copy posters, then distributing those posters throughout our system," says Clouser. "Under those circumstances, it can be difficult to make sure that the posters go up in a timely manner, and it can be just as difficult to make sure that out-of-date posters come down."

With Cisco Digital Signage solutions, the organization can control and disseminate systemwide announcements from a central console, sending a clear, targeted, consistent message to the appropriate audience.

Training, Templates, and Remote Support for Long-Term Success

After helping implement the technology, Cisco Services assisted Advocate Health Care's internal communications team in developing instructional templates to be used for training employees on how to use the customized telepresence system. "We continue to see an increase in the adoption of the technology," says Clouser. "Which, in turn, means a faster ROI [return on investment]." In addition to room-based TelePresence solutions, the Advocate team's video portfolio has extended to the desktop with the use of Cisco TelePresence EX90 units as well.

One of Clouser's concerns was making sure that the company would not need to increase staff to support the new Cisco technology. He found what he needed was Cisco Remote Management Services, which provides remote monitoring and management, as well as on-demand support for improved TelePresence availability and enhanced visibility into the network. "We tell our TelePresence users that if they encounter any issues at all, they can simply pick up the phone, hit a button, and they'll be automatically connected to a Cisco expert who can troubleshoot with them," says Clouser. "That level of support is invaluable, because it helps us maintain meeting schedules and make the most of attendees' time, all while minimizing the cost of hiring and training additional IT staff."

Results

Today, the Advocate Health Care team could not be happier with its growing Cisco TelePresence network. "Rather than having to integrate a separate technology into the boardroom, we were able to customize a very unique solution to meet our needs," says Clouser. "Thanks to the assistance we received from Cisco Services, we were able to make the most of our TelePresence investment by extending it for executive and board use as well." Not only did the Cisco Video Experience engagement enable faster executive decision making, the company also has a video conferencing standard that it can continue to build on as it moves forward with its unified communications initiative.

Physicians have been quick to recognize the value of Cisco TelePresence, and their feedback has been tremendously positive. "At the end of a long day, no physician wants to drive an hour each way for an in-person meeting," says Dr. Rishi Sikka, Vice President of Clinical Transformation. "But if they can walk into a TelePresence room in their own hospital right after surgery, and get the information they need as efficiently as possible, they appreciate that. We see more physicians in virtual meetings than we ever saw in our in-person meetings, and our TelePresence rooms are frequently booked into the evening and early night."

With widespread adoption of Cisco video technology across the Advocate Health Care system, executives are already seeing a healthy ROI. "If you get a group of highly-paid physicians into a central location without requiring them to travel, that translates into a considerable cost savings for the organization," says Dr. Lee Sacks, executive vice president and chief medical officer at Advocate Health Care. "In fact, not too long ago, we held a single TelePresence meeting for 20 spine surgeons to discuss implantable devices. I'm certain that we paid for our entire TelePresence investment with that one meeting, in terms of identifying opportunities to better manage the costs associated with those devices."
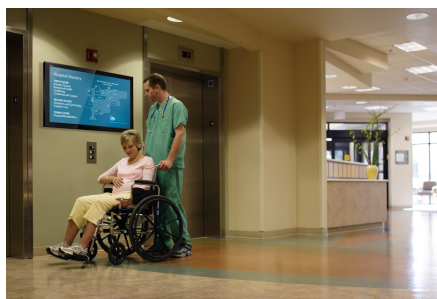
Cisco Digital Signage helps the Advocate team reduce administrative costs as well. "For every 10 hard-copy signs that we used to produce, we can buy a digital sign," says Clouser. "Or to put it another way, for every 200 feet of printed signs that we used to produce, we're able to save $200 with digital signage. For us, the cost savings are almost immediate."

"The quality of an organization's service all depends on effective leadership," adds Clouser. "If we're improving productivity and enhancing the way we share best practices internally, we're making a positive impact on our patients' care. In this way, I believe Cisco TelePresence strengthens our competitive advantage, as well as our position as a technology leader in the healthcare industry."

Next Steps

As part of the next steps in its unified communications initiative, Advocate Health Care is deploying additional TelePresence systems throughout the organization. Other collaboration technologies are on the company's near-term roadmap, including Cisco WebEx® collaboration solutions, Cisco Show and Share®, and the Cisco Media Experience Engine. "Moving forward, I'm very interested in seeing how we can leverage our video technologies to collaborate with external partners and even to expand patients' access to care," says Clouser. "As the healthcare industry continues to evolve, that level of interaction and collaboration will only become more necessary. And I'm confident that Cisco Services will help us make the most of it."

For More Information

· To learn more about Cisco Services for Business Video, visit:
  www.cisco.com/go/services/businessvideo.

· To find out more about Cisco Remote Management Services, visit:
  www.cisco.com/go/rms.

· To find out more about Cisco TelePresence solutions, visit:
  www.cisco.com/go/telepresence.

· To learn more about Cisco solutions for the Healthcare industry, visit:
  www.cisco.com/go/healthcare.

Product List

· Cisco TelePresence System 500 Series

· Cisco TelePresence System 1300 Series

· Cisco TelePresence System EX90 Series

· Cisco TelePresence Movi

· Cisco Unified Communications Manager

· Cisco WebEx

· Cisco Digital Media Suite
  - Cisco Digital Signs
  - Cisco Show and Share
  - Cisco Cast

· Cisco MXE (Media Experience Engine) Series

Services List

· Cisco Video Experience Services

· Cisco Remote Management Services