

# Healthcare Provider Boosts Productivity with Telepresence

Customer Case Study



Advocate Health Care adds video-enabled custom boardroom designed by Cisco Services to existing TelePresence network.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Advocate Health Care

- Healthcare
- Oak Brook, Illinois
- 30,000 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 500 systems enable face-to-face video collaboration
- Cisco Video Experience Services customize unique TelePresence solution for boardroom

### Business Results:

- Accelerated executive decision making with more frequent face-to-face communication
- Created more personal interaction between remote teams on regular basis
- Enhanced quality of care with more time spent on services than traveling for meetings

## Business Challenge

As the largest healthcare provider 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 30,000 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 10 healthcare systems in the country. Looking to enhance and expand its services further, Advocate Health Care's long-term plan is one of growth over the next decade. This need to connect an increasingly dispersive associate network spurred a new unified communications initiative for the organization in 2009.

Rance Clouser, the company's director of enterprise resource planning (ERP) and Unified Communications, was tasked with driving this initiative forward. "With many of our sites scattered throughout the 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 Clouser. "That's why one of our primary objectives was to integrate a telepresence solution into our infrastructure. We wanted to reduce, if not eliminate, travel and make better use of our employees' time."

After evaluating several video conferencing solutions, Advocate Health Care decided to deploy Cisco TelePresence® 1300 systems to three of its remote sites. When the company's executive management team heard about these plans, they requested an additional deployment in the corporate office's boardroom. Unfortunately, this posed a challenge for Clouser and his 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.



**“Thanks to the assistance we received from Cisco Services, we were able to make the most out of our TelePresence investment...”**

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Rance Clouser  
Director of ERP and Unified Communications  
Advocate Health Care

With its other Cisco TelePresence units already in place, Clouser and his 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 its video network. “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 various needs.”

### Network Solution

Clouser discussed this challenge 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 Clouser. “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. “That was very much appreciated. 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.”

Working closely with Cisco Services and the Cisco account team, the Advocate Health Care team shared its requirements and needs, both from a business and technical standpoint. From there, 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 mere 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.

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].”

### Business 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.

For employees, one of the primary benefits of the Cisco TelePresence deployment has been the newfound efficiencies enabled between remote teams. Because they no longer have to drive the hour or two that it takes to get to each of Advocate Health Care's numerous regional sites, Clouser expects to see a great improvement in productivity. "When we wanted to relay a companywide message in the past, we would have to conduct the same meeting at all our different sites, which could literally take almost a week to cover," he says. "But today, we are building a video conferencing environment to have representatives from our entire organization in a meeting at once. It's an incredible time saver."

In addition to productivity gains, telepresence meetings also help build more close-knit relationships between Advocate Health Care's multisite teams. Says Clouser, "With video conferencing, associates are now able to collaborate with each other face-to-face on a more frequent basis. I see this deployment creating more personal interactions."

"The quality of an organization's service all depends on effective leadership," he adds. "If we're improving productivity and enhancing the way we work together 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 an additional ten TelePresence 1300 units throughout the organization. Other collaboration technologies, such as Cisco WebEx® Training Center, are also being considered for implementation. "Moving forward, I'm very interested in seeing how we can leverage our video technologies further, and continue to improve our operational efficiency," says Clouser. "Based on our positive experience with Cisco Services, I'm sure we'll be working with them again in the near future."

### For More Information

- To learn more about Cisco Services for Business Video, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/services/businessvideo](http://www.cisco.com/go/services/businessvideo).
- To find out more about Cisco Video Experience Services, download the At-A-Glance: [http://www.cisco.com/en/US/services/ps2961/ps7072/CiscoTelepresenceVideo\\_QRG.pdf](http://www.cisco.com/en/US/services/ps2961/ps7072/CiscoTelepresenceVideo_QRG.pdf).
- To find out more about Cisco TelePresence solutions, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/telepresence](http://www.cisco.com/go/telepresence).

### Product List

- Cisco TelePresence System 500 Series
- Cisco TelePresence System 1300 Series
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager)

### Services List

- Cisco Video Experience Services



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