



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

The Mizkan Group Streamlines Worldwide Staff Collaboration and Communication with Polycom® Telepresence

Industry

- Manufacturing

Daily use

- Management meetings
- Planning sessions
- Internal meetings and collaboration
- Team collaboration
- Third-party collaboration

Solution

- Video conferencing technology that provided clearer voice and video interactions

Results and benefits

- Real-time and lifelike management meetings between The Mizkan Group's headquarters, domestic and international locations
- Reduction in travel time and costs
- Achieved dramatic increases in productivity and efficiency
- Modified work processes improved the company's business effectiveness
- Harmonious work-life balance
- Mitigated the risks of travelling and helped business continuity planning

The Mizkan Group has been in the food manufacturing business since 1804. Considered a leading player in the worldwide liquid condiment sector, it owns a range of well-known international brands and products including vinegar, mirin and ponzu sauces, salad dressings and seasonings.

Headquartered in Handa City in Aichi, Japan, the company has operations across the globe—with facilities located in Japan, China, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the UK and the US—as well as, its 13 domestic branches. With an ever-expanding presence, The Mizkan Group embarked on a medium-term management plan for 2009 that aims to realize its slogan, “One-world management to enhance internal relations and establish the identity of the ‘Mizkan’ brand to enhance globalization efforts.” In order to achieve its management goals, however, the company needed to come up with a secure and efficient information sharing process between its local and international branches.

The Mizkan Group has many plants throughout Japan to manufacture its products near the major markets such as Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka. This saves logistics costs because its products are heavy and bulky to transport. “The company invested in technology to facilitate communication but these were not sufficient,” said Hiroshi Masuda, manager, Information Planning Section, Management Information Systems Department, Mizkan Busitec—the unit responsible for handling The Mizkan Group's information systems operations.

“Although we have already been using telephone, e-mail and audio conferencing, we felt that a means of communication with more ‘realism’ was needed,” said Mr. Masuda. Business trips between offices proved not only costly but inefficient. Regardless of the destination, business trips required extensive planning with staff from various departments to maximize executive time and costly fares. Rather than improve business efficiency, they were having the opposite effect.



“Polycom’s telepresence solutions have enabled us to realize tangible benefits in productivity and business competitiveness. Reducing the need to travel means our teams can spend more time with their families, improving their work-life balance.”

Hiroshi Masuda, Manager, Information Planning Section, Management Information Systems Department, Mizkan Busitec

Superior sound and image results in high quality

The Mizkan Group deployed a video conferencing system that used ISDN for real-time information sharing in the early 1990s. The results were poor because of the hefty communications costs and inferior image quality.

“We also considered web conferencing, but it did not deliver the necessary quality. We needed something capable of making us feel like we were actually in a face-to-face meeting.

“Compared to other companies, Polycom offers a depth to the sound... literally a sense of realism as if the person was actually in front of you. The high-quality images and sound through inconspicuous microphones all help towards reproducing natural conversations,” said Mr. Masuda.

The Mizkan Group measured Polycom telepresence success on the impression it made on users with enormous and immediate impact on its employees. Also important to The Mizkan Group’s product selection was the size of Polycom’s global market share because of its own to increase its overseas presence as it needed a product with worldwide support.

Sharing information between global offices

Five Polycom® HDX® 8004 XLP room telepresence units have been installed at the company headquarters and one Polycom® HDX® 7002 XL telepresence unit has been deployed at each strategic international offices in the US, England and China as well as its 13 branch offices in Japan.

The Mizkan Group can now share materials between branch offices and organize meetings that involve multipoint connections, including the headquarters. To ensure secure and reliable connectivity, a closed IPVPN network solution is adopted and a high-quality connection is maintained by providing guaranteed bandwidth of at least 1 Mbps on each access line.

The benefits of the system were immediately recognized during management meetings involving overseas bases, but more significant advantages were realized after the solution was adopted by the company’s Japanese branches.

Cutting business-related travel expenses by 10%

The company estimates that Polycom telepresence has been used over 200 times by more than 1,000 of its employees for monthly meetings between branch offices and plants, meetings between field-level employees, and planning meetings with Tokyo-based advertising agencies and other external parties. This could not have been achieved without Polycom’s strong channel partner network. Princeton Technology, a Platinum partner, provided tremendous support in implementing the video conferencing platform in Mizkan over a short period. In just one year this platform has transformed the company’s information sharing infrastructure to deliver “highly transparent and reliable communication.”

In terms of overseas business travel alone, The Mizkan Group has reduced expenses by over 10 percent.

Changing the way people work

Telepresence has changed work processes and improved business effectiveness. “By improving business efficiency and enabling employees to spend more time with their families rather than travelling, we hope that it will help lead to a better work-life balance,” said Mr. Masuda.

“Polycom’s telepresence solution also helps mitigate the risks surrounding global pandemics such as the Influenza A (H1N1).”

Broadening use for more than simply meetings

With “Change and Challenge” as its slogan, The Mizkan Group has taken an aggressive stance in embracing new concepts and continuing to grow, while observing the centuries-long traditions maintained as an established business.

The company plans to expand its Polycom’s telepresence solution. “We hope to conduct nationwide briefings on our new products,” said Mr. Masuda.

Feedback on future uses and development has already started, including using the system to send video messages to all branch offices, and recording meetings for on-demand playback.

“Compared to other companies, there was a depth to the sound... literally a sense of realism as if the person was actually in front of you.”

Hiroshi Masuda, Manager, Information Planning Section, Management Information Systems Department, Mizkan Busitec

Looking to the future, the company is considering a multipoint connection unit and meeting recording unit, and has also expressed its intention to use telepresence for a variety of applications.

Learn more

To find out how Polycom solutions can help your organization, visit us at www.polycom.asia or speak with a Polycom Account Representative.

Product listing

Telepresence solutions

- Polycom® HDX® 8000
- Polycom® HDX® 7000

About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in open standards-based unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solutions for voice and video collaboration, trusted by more than 415,000 customers around the world. Polycom solutions are powered by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform, comprehensive software infrastructure and rich APIs that interoperate with the broadest set of communication, business, mobile and cloud applications and devices to deliver secure face-to-face video collaboration in any environment.

Polycom, Inc.
1.800.POLYCOM
www.polycom.com

Polycom Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
+65 6389 9200
www.polycom.asia

Polycom EMEA
+44 (0)1753 723282
www.polycom.co.uk

