VIT Worldwide Videoconferencing Uses Polycom Solutions to Sharpen Vermont's Competitive Edge

Industry

- Education
- Government

Daily use

- Distance learning
- Administrative and government meetings
- Partner interaction
- Recruiting and interviews

Solution

- Polycom network links 17 VIT studios across Vermont, enabling schools, businesses, government agencies, and non-profits to collaborate face to face
- Polycom® RealPresence® Collaboration Server 4000 conference platform enables multipoint calls, while Polycom® RSS™ 4000 server allows VIT to archive and stream conferences
- Polycom® Converged Management Application™ (CMA®) solution and Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP®) processor card gave the effort to extend VIT to more schools

Results and benefits

- With VIT calls costing 70 percent less than in-person meetings, Vermonters saved $4.3 million in 2009
- Reduced travel saves 150 miles per meeting, or 4.8 million miles in 2009
- Replacing in-person meetings with video calls prevented emissions of 190 tons of air pollution and 2,500 tons of greenhouse gases in 2009

Overview

Throughout the state of Vermont and beyond, VIT Worldwide Videoconferencing is transforming the way people learn, work, govern, and contribute. VIT's 17-studio video communications infrastructure—powered entirely by Polycom—is one of the most versatile networks of its kind in use anywhere. Educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses all share time on the network to cost-effectively collaborate face-to-face across the state and around the world.

The increasingly popular service—time spent on VIT jumped 15 percent in 2009—is delivering impressive benefits to Vermonters. VIT saved its clients $4.3 million in 2009. The average VIT video conference costs 70 percent less than in-person meetings and saves more than 150 miles of driving. In 2009, that meant more than 32,700 participants were spared 4.8 million miles of travel while reclaiming 90,000 hours by conducting business over video. The system also prevented emissions of 190 tons of air pollution and 2,500 tons of greenhouse gases. Businesses are more competitive, colleges and technical schools reach more students, government is more efficient, and non-profits can do more with less.

![VIT Worldwide Videoconferencing logo]

"Our clients demand a high-quality experience and complete reliability. If a video conference fails, you don't get that customer back. Polycom delivers the quality and reliability we need to serve our clients well."

Tara Lidstone, Executive Director, VIT Worldwide Videoconferencing

Keeping Vermont competitive

Vermont's lakes and mountains can make driving a challenge, isolating places like St. Albans, a lakeside town just a county away from Canada, from larger cities further south. "That once threatened the state's competitiveness. Every community needs access to higher education, workforce training, and businesses expertise," Tara Lidstone, executive director at VIT, argues. "But many of these places lack the resources, the budget, and the people to have those things available locally."

To close that gap, the state launched Vermont Interactive Television (VIT) in 1988. Its early adopters were educators at Vermont Technical College (VTC), who were looking for ways to bring VTC courses to the state's remote Northeast Kingdom. "Twenty years ago, it took a lot to get a connection to happen," says Linda Brownell, a VIT regional manager. "VIT offered an alternative to sending faculty on the road or hiring faculty up there."

Since then, the network has grown in size and sophistication. Today, the state-subsidized service connects Polycom video endpoints in 17 communities. "Other video conferencing networks belong to one company, one school district, one government agency," says Lidstone. "VIT is available to all Vermonters." Using a tiered pricing system, VIT leases conference time in one-hour increments, enabling nearly 300 organizations to collaborate across the state and around the world, without requiring them to purchase or maintain video equipment. Users schedule meetings online or by phone.

By any standard, the reach of VIT is impressive

Education

Vermont State Colleges and the University of Vermont deliver Allied Health programs, such as nursing and respiratory therapy, over VIT. Monique Van Leuven took all of her VTC nursing program classes over VIT. In 2010, Van Leuven was named Vermont's New Century Scholar, earning her a spot on the coveted All-USA Academic Team. Frequently walking to attend classes at the VIT studio near her home in St. Albans,

where she also works and raises a family, Van Leuven credits VIT for making it easier to earn a degree: "It was nice to know I didn't have to drive an hour to get to class."

Government

The use of VIT at all levels of government doubled in 2009. State lawmakers use VIT to give citizens a voice in the annual budget proceedings, "Without VIT, they'd have to travel to Montpelier to be heard," Lidstone says. Other agencies save money by using VIT for training sessions and court proceedings.

Non-profits

Users range from unions and professional organizations to charities. More than 58 percent of plumbers receive their licenses after taking courses over VIT.

Business

Businesses make up VIT's fastest growing segment. They rely on VIT for candidate interviews, legal depositions and partner meetings. Because Polycom's open standards-based systems allow VIT endpoints to interact with any other, VIT users have had face-to-face video meetings with colleagues in New Zealand, Abu Dhabi and Russia, among others. "With Polycom, we can talk to anyone we want," says Brownell.

Building a smarter network

Working with IVCi, LLC, a premier Polycom partner and leading integrator, VIT is upgrading its studios with Polycom® HDX® telepresence solutions. With IVCi's help, VIT is moving to a complete IP environment backed by a Polycom® RealPresence® Collaboration Server 4000 multipoint conference solution, Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP™) firewall traversal solution, and Polycom® Converged Management Application™ (CMA®) conference management platform. A Polycom® RSS™ 4000 system allows VIT to record, archive and stream conferences. VIT will also use Polycom® CMA® Desktop software to expand its services and enable Vermonters to videoconference from their own homes and offices.

"The technology has to work. But it has to stay in the background, so people can focus on each other. That's why we use Polycom."

Linda Brownell, Regional Manager, VIT Worldwide Videoconferencing

"VIT is an extraordinary service," says Eric Cornell, regional sales director at IVCi. "With Polycom solutions, we're creating a smarter network that will serve them well for years."

For VIT, Polycom means an experience that's memorable—but in a good way. "Our clients demand a high-quality experience and complete reliability," says Lidstone. "If a video conference fails, you don't get that customer back. Polycom delivers the quality and reliability our clients demand and IVCi provides extraordinary support when we need it."

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Partner

IVCi, LLC

www.ivci.com

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.

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