



Enterprise

▶ International Mining Company Xstrata Strikes Big with Polycom HD Video Conferencing Systems

A Polycom high definition video conferencing solution has delivered travel savings and work efficiencies as well as reinforcing the company's commitment to reducing its environmental impact.

▶ Daily Use

- Internal communications
- Executive committee meetings
- C-level communications

▶ Solution

- Polycom® HDX™ 9000 room telepresence system
- Polycom® Converged Management Application™ (CMA™) solution
- Polycom® RMX conference platform
- Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP™)
- Polycom® HDX™ 4000 telepresence system

▶ Results and Benefits

- Rapid user uptake and rapid ROI
- Substantial reduction in travel cost
- Improved business efficiencies
- Better employee work-life balance

For a rapidly-expanding company with interests in alloys, coal, copper, nickel, zinc and mining technology employing 40,000 employees worldwide, achieving costs savings and efficiencies is always a major consideration for the Swiss mining company, Xstrata.

The global nature of the company coupled with many of its operations sited in remote locations has created some interesting challenges. Long-distance meetings to places which are often off the beaten track can be a regular occurrence for managers and executives of the various Commodity Business Units at Xstrata. The logistics of such meetings frequently involve exhaustive hours of air travel, often followed by jarring car journeys to a meeting of several hours, only to be repeated as personnel travel back to their respective offices.

Xstrata CIO Jason Wilkins explained: "It got to a point in 2007 when we realised we had to do something about it. The cumulative cost of travel throughout the organisation was mounting and the disruptive effect on staff wasn't good for their work/life balance and therefore for productivity."

Wilkins and his colleagues reviewed the possibility of investing in video conferencing as a communications platform that would deliver efficiencies across the board for the travelling Xstrata executives.

"We already had quite a large number of legacy ISDN video conferencing systems that didn't deliver the quality of meeting experience our executives demanded and were therefore under-used," Wilkins admitted. "They are standard definition with relatively poor video and audio quality and deliver an unacceptably high drop-out rate over ISDN."

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Jason Wilkins, CIO, Xstrata



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Wilkins knew the technology had moved on and that he could offer the executives, managers, and business operations at the organisation's global business units a better, more interactive and realistic meeting experience using the latest video conferencing solutions. After a review of the market options, Wilkins and his team chose the Polycom® HDX™ 9000 platform as offering the best combination of quality, scalability and flexibility.

The Polycom HDX 9000 solution delivers true high definition (HD) video, audio, and content-sharing capabilities. Combined with the Polycom RMX multipoint bridge, the Polycom Video Border Proxy™ (VBP™) firewall traversal device and a Polycom CMA, this solution gives Xstrata the ability to extend its communication reach far beyond anything previously possible.

Now, the organisation is not only able to institute internal IP communications using the Polycom platform, but also can incorporate onto the network its legacy ISDN users as well as external networks—thanks to the Polycom VBP capability. By performing video network address translation (NAT) at the IP address boundary, Polycom VBP enables Xstrata partners and suppliers to securely traverse Xstrata firewalls while still maintaining the integrity and security of the network.

“The Polycom solution enabled us to significantly upgrade and extend our video conferencing experience using the Polycom VBP appliance to handle the security aspect,” Wilkins said.

The Polycom HDX 9000 solution also offers Xstrata the choice of implementing either single or dual, wide-screen performance depending on location and user requirements.

The Polycom RMX bridge improves the collaborative experience through resilient multipoint, anytime, on-demand conferencing in full HD. The Polycom CMA solution offers device management and scheduling and integrates with existing corporate directory services to create a ‘global’ directory. It also acts as an integrated gatekeeper, delivering a more efficient and seamless solution.

Since the implementation in January 2009, Wilkins has witnessed strong user uptake of the new Polycom system throughout the enterprise. Now, regular meetings are increasingly being conducted in the comfort and security of the company's local meeting rooms, thus saving time and money.

An example of video conferencing usage at Xstrata is the budget meeting held by the Xstrata Nickel executive committee for all eight of the company's nickel mining sites. In the past, one meeting would have cost the company an estimated \$US60,000 in flights and associated travel costs alone. The same meetings are now carried out over video conference link which also saves hundreds of hours of travel time and eliminates the stress of early starts and airports.

“The video conferencing decision wasn't just about high definition or the latest technology” Wilkins said, “it was more about ensuring that the quality of the video conference experience was sufficient to attract users and replace costly in person meetings. The Polycom solution has demonstrated this with remarkable success.”

Wilkins confirmed that the Polycom system has delivered a rapid return on investment as well as eliminating employee fatigue, enhancing safety, reducing cost and travel time, lessening environmental impact and delivering productivity gains.

Future Plans

Wilkins stated further Polycom systems are being ordered as more and more executives across the organisation experience the benefits of Polycom video conferencing. The first of these was when the company's Corporate Affairs department in Switzerland used the system and immediately ordered another for their counterpart in the Peru office.

“We are looking at installing a further series of Polycom HDX 4000 desktop solutions as well as the video conferencing company's CMA desktop systems to increase the user population throughout the organisation,” Wilkins concluded. “We are extremely pleased with our relationship with Polycom and view it as a long term partnership that enables us to capitalise on our network and our video conferencing solution.”

Learn More

Polycom, Inc. is the global leader in telepresence, video, and voice solutions and a visionary in communications that empower people to connect and collaborate everywhere. Visit www.polycom.com to find out how Polycom solutions can benefit your organisation.

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