

Barnardo's uses LifeSize HD Video Communications to Reduce Travel, Keep Regionally Dispersed Teams Connected

One of the UK's leading children's charities, supporting over 100,000 children and their families in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, uses HD video communications to save money and reduce travel

Organization

Barnardo's, Barkingside, Essex, UK

Barnardo's is a British charity founded by the Irish Doctor Thomas John Barnardo in 1866, to care for vulnerable young people. As of 2008, it spends over £214 million each year on more than 400 projects aimed at helping these same groups.

Today, the charity works with disabled children, victims of sexual abuse, homeless children and children and young people affected by HIV and AIDS. The alleviation of child poverty links most of its work with more than 100,000 children. In recent years it has accompanied its service delivery work with some robust campaigning on Sarah's Law, asylum seeking children, children in care, young carers and, most prominently, child poverty. The combination of service delivery and its campaigning voice makes Barnardo's one of the UK's leading children's charities.

Barnardo's has over 330 shops across the UK where patrons can donate new and used items and shop for new and used ones. All profits from their stores go to Barnardo's to support their vital work helping the UK's most vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfill their potential.



Barnardo's Big Toddle, the UK's biggest charity event for under 5's involves more than half a million children every year for a short sponsored walk to raise money for the charity.



CHALLENGE

With a widely dispersed team of nearly 17,000 employees and volunteers working for the charity, constant communication is vital. Looking to reduce travel and increase face-to-face communication, Barnardo's needed a way to bridge the gap.



SOLUTION

After thorough demonstrations of the different manufacturer's video products, Barnardo's implemented a combination of LifeSize® Team MP™, LifeSize® Express™ and LifeSize® Room™ systems among all regional and national offices.



RESULTS

Through the use of HD video from LifeSize, Barnardo's has realized significant reduction in travel and travel-related expenses and improved communications among internal and external groups, resulting in better care to those who need it most.



Challenge

With some 6,500 employees and over 11,000 volunteers working with the charity across five regional and four national offices, keeping project teams connected has always been a challenge.

The distance from the Barnardo's regional office in Yorkshire to the central London location, for example, is over 300 miles. With so many groups working on hundreds of critical projects everyday, constant and direct communication is key.

As a non-profit business, Barnardo's mission is to make the most of every donation. But with the high cost of oil and the economic downturn, like many organizations, travel reduction became a necessity.

In order to keep the more than 400 current charitable projects running smoothly, Barnardo's executives decided that a new communications tool was needed. One that could help the organization save money by reducing travel, but also replicate the face-to-face meeting experience.

Key requirements for Barnardo's:

Superior quality: HD audio and video for a seamless, in-room feel between locations.

Flexibility: Easy to deploy, simple to use, with built-in collaboration tools.

Unmatched price performance: As a charity, the organization's first priority is the children it serves. A new technology investment must make sense financially.



One of the 330 Barnardo's shops across the UK. This one is located in Central London.



"Why send an e-mail when you can share a presentation and talk over the report face to face -- with the LifeSize technology, everyone knows where you stand."

– PAUL PANTON, TELECOMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



Solution

Barnardo's sought out a leading technology integrator to help the charity understand the different video communications systems on the market and demonstrate the technology. After thorough testing and demonstrations from all major video conferencing vendors, Barnardo's decided that the HD solution from LifeSize best met their needs and the charity soon began an organization-wide roll-out.

A combination of 14 LifeSize® Team MP™, LifeSize® Express™ and LifeSize® Room™ systems were deployed among the different Barnardo's regions in England, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

Barnardo's also implemented the LifeSize® Control™ management software to allow the IT group to manage all video systems at all times.

"We chose LifeSize because the systems are easy to use and give you incredible quality," said Paul Pantan, Telecommunications Manager for Barnardo's.





Results

With more than 400 projects currently running, LifeSize has helped Barnardo's do what they do best -- help children. Since the implementation of HD video, Barnardo's has realized improved business support, more streamlined operations and collaborative connections, as well as significantly improved communication between regional and national offices.

And as the technology grew within the various locations, so did the acceptance.

In the beginning, many employees thought that using the systems was going to be quite difficult. But Panton says their fears soon diminished as users began to experience it for themselves.

"The organization absolutely loves it," he said. "Simple to use and very intuitive."

The Barnardo's IT group now regularly holds video conferencing clinics, where employees can drop-in, ask specific questions and drive the systems. This ensures that even infrequent users are comfortable and confident using the systems. They've even personalized all units with the Barnardo's strapline, "Believe in Children" on the LifeSize home screen.

As an organization, Barnardo's has seen significant reductions in travel. Panton says that while some travel simply cannot be avoided, Barnardo's has seen a large number of meetings now occurring over video. From an environmental standpoint, the organization's carbon footprint has also been reduced.

LifeSize is also enabling the organization to work more with external audiences. In June 2009, The University of California, Berkley partnered with Barnardo's in a joint child protection initiative. University students and researchers were able to connect with leaders at Barnardo's over LifeSize HD video, opening up the doors for the charity to collaborate with other universities and thought-leadership groups globally, without the barrier of travel.

Video communications has also given Barnardo's the opportunity to participate in more charity to charity collaboration. Longtime partners with the British Red Cross, the two organizations are now able to meet over video.

"Why send an e-mail when you can share a presentation and talk over the report face to face," Panton said. "With LifeSize, everyone knows where you stand."



The Barnardo's strapline is: Believe in Children.

We believe in the abused, the vulnerable, the forgotten and the neglected. We will support them, stand up for them and bring out the best in each and every child. (Excerpt from the Barnardo's mission statement)



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