

India's Rural Based Handmade Carpet Industry Accesses Upscale US Market with HD Video

OBEETEE INC, a premier importer and distributor of fine handmade carpets, uses LifeSize high definition video communications to bring their luxury carpets from rural India to US trade show



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Renowned as the foremost source for the finest handmade carpets in India, OBEETEE has received numerous national awards for being the nation's largest and most reputable exporter.

Organization

Obeetee Private Ltd., Mirzapur, India; OBEETEE INC., New York, New York

OBEETEE Private Ltd. is located in Mirzapur, India in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Founded in 1920, the company manufactures and globally distributes exquisite hand-knotted, hand-tufted and flat-woven floor coverings. OBEETEE INC. is a New York based, wholly-owned subsidiary of OBEETEE Private Ltd., with showrooms in New York and Atlanta. OBEETEE is internationally known for its uncompromising quality standards, professional management and state-of-the-art computerized design department. The company prides itself in being at the cutting edge of technology and has been a frontrunner in the industry in meeting its social obligations towards employees as well as society and the environment.

OBEETEE is the first licensee of the Woolmark as well as the Fernmark for handmade carpets and also the first company to acquire the Social Accountability 8000 Certification in the handmade carpet industry. It employs 1100 workmen in its factory and provides gainful employment to more than 30,000 artisans in the rural areas for carpet weaving and processing.

Challenge

In order to bridge the gap between US based customers of OBEETEE Inc. and its greatest asset, OBEETEE Private Ltd., the company wanted buyers to understand the strengths of the latter and the value of doing business with India's largest and most professionally run carpet manufacturing organization. This exchange was set to take place from the showroom of Obeetee Inc. located at the Merchandising Mart in Atlanta, Georgia during the carpet trade fair known as the Atlanta Rug Market.

Key needs included:

Video quality: Offer high quality, crisp HD resolutions to allow trade show attendees to view the exquisite craftsmanship of the fine carpets in great detail

Bandwidth efficiency: Deliver quality video for bandwidth limitations in rural India and Atlanta trade show

Results: Offer an easy-to-use, "plug and play" solution that OBEETEE executives can set up without hassle

The OBEETEE management team needed to do the following in order to achieve the above objective:

- To display a large range of products for its programme line and Limited Editions (one-of-a-kind pieces), a very large space would need to be rented for the showroom in the Atlanta Merchandising Mart
- Managers and designers from India needed to travel to the US to interact with customers
- Live demonstrations of carpet weaving on looms by skilled artisans were to be organized to educate the customers on the realities of handmade carpet weaving



All of these logistical elements, though necessary, would prove to be prohibitively expensive. A solution would combine the presence of sample merchandise in Atlanta to allow customers to touch and feel the fine quality carpets while providing the opportunity for customer, designer and production executive to interact face-to-face while surveying the extensive line of unique wares on-site in India.

Solution

After consulting with PLUS Business Machines Limited, a leading provider of high-technology solutions for India, OBEETEE selected LifeSize® Express™ as the solution that best suited their needs. The point-to-point HD video communications system from LifeSize allowed them to connect directly to their headquarters in Mirzapur, India and simultaneously with their factory and production units while offering a fully immersive high definition experience to the customer in Atlanta.

Simply by using a public internet connection, readily available at their booth at the trade show in Atlanta, sales executives at OBEETEE were able to give existing and potential customers a truly hands-on experience. With the quality of LifeSize high definition video, colors were vivid and crisp and the detail of the hand-woven masterpieces could be easily examined, even down to the most intricate threading and detail work within each carpet's unique design.

"In spite of the use of just a public internet connection with limited bandwidth, the images were clear and bright," said Edward Oakley, Chairman, OBEETEE INC.

Results

By linking the two sites, OBEETEE was able to address the upscale clientele at the trade show effectively by allowing buyers to have an intimate, one-on-one experience. Instead of simply looking at pictures in a sample book, buyers were able to discuss color, design, materials and texture with the designers in India who made the works of art thousands of miles away.

"LifeSize helped us generate greater sales and greater customer satisfaction," Oakley said.

"With LifeSize, you really can be in two places at once," said Craig Malloy, CEO of LifeSize Communications. "OBEETEE is a great example of how a company, based thousands of miles away, can actually get business done faster by significantly reducing the need to travel and ship goods. It's just that simple."



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