

Grocery Chain Pursues Green Initiatives, Reduces Travel by 70 Percent with LifeSize HD Video Systems

South Africa's Largest Supermarket Chain Chooses LifeSize to Increase Productivity, Cut Time and Expense of Travel

Organization

South Africa's leading grocery store is one of the most successful retailers of food, clothing and general merchandise in the country.

The business has about 160 convenience supermarkets countrywide and 20 "hypermarkets", large facilities that sell lower-priced food items and general merchandise to the public. The company has also expanded into franchise locations where owner-managers run the store and the chain's corporate offices provide only sourcing and operational support.

Routinely recognized for its business model and sustainable-living initiatives, the grocery company has received awards by local newspapers and is routinely praised by community members.

Along with South Africa, the business also has a local presence in other regions of southern Africa including Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia and Australia.



Challenge

With a geographically-dispersed workforce of over 50,000 individuals in South Africa and Australia, the company relied heavily on air travel to conduct business. With key locations in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, a one-way flight of 70 minutes often costs team members an entire day of work. In fact, many executives reported that they spent more time in airports than in their own office.

Along with time and expense, the company also understood the negative impact business travel has on the environment. The grocery chain was known for its sustainable practices, such as providing eco-friendly shopping bags and maintaining partnerships with organic product lines, as well as consuming energy from wind turbines and biodiesel fuel. The need for an equally sustainable business environment became immediately apparent. The grocery chain needed a way to communicate with its workforce face to face, without contributing to damaging pollution.



CHALLENGE

The grocery chain needed a video solution that would provide superior quality, user simplicity and unprecedented price-performance to save time and money from business travel.



SOLUTION

More than 20 LifeSize HD video communication systems, including LifeSize Room and LifeSize Express were implemented in their main office locations across the country.



RESULTS

The company has seen a 70 percent reduction in travel costs. In addition, they have experienced improved communication and employee morale among local and regional offices.



Solution

The grocery chain tested various video conferencing products on the market and, after careful consideration, chose LifeSize for its HD quality, bandwidth efficiency on their existing network infrastructure and unmatched price-performance. Shortly thereafter, the company implemented more than 20 LifeSize® Express™ and LifeSize® Room™ endpoints in their main South Africa offices, as well as regional offices around the country.



Results

“We have reduced our air travel by about 70 percent since implementing LifeSize,” said the group services procurement manager for the grocery chain. “Before the LifeSize video implementation, our C-level executives traveled at least three days a week. Now that we have HD video, they are out of the office just four days per month maximum.”

The HD video collaboration systems were so popular, the executives of the company soon mandated that everyone in the company begin using them. Adoption was not difficult for the workforce, many of whom were simply fed up with business travel.

“Our executive team told us, ‘if you can’t use video conferencing for your meetings, you will have to fly’. Everyone would much rather use VC than waste time in an airport all day. It was an easy transition, to say the least,” the procurement manager said.

Now, every department in the company, including marketing, human resources and finance, is using video and audio calls to collaborate. Across the organization, productivity and morale has improved, thus making work more efficient and enjoyable for every employee.



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In terms of environmental impact, the company is able to save 1,090 lbs. of CO2 by avoiding just one round-trip flight from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth. Based on the executives’ previous travel schedules, the grocery retailer estimates that they are now saving over 13,000 lbs. of CO2 per week, all thanks to LifeSize’s HD video technology.

LifeSize solutions were able to address every goal that the company had: reduce the cost and inefficiency of travel and cut carbon emissions. Now, employees enjoy an improved quality of life, while the company can get back to providing food and other retail items to the people of Africa and Australia. No longer does the grocery chain have to focus on the hassle of business travel but instead, their core mission: making the world a better, cleaner place.



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