

Community Telco connects regional Australia with LifeSize HD video

Connecting multiple offices across regional Australia without the travel burden, HD video communications is a big success for Community Telco Australia.

Organisation

Community Telco Australia – Bendigo, Victoria

Community Telco Australia is a community based wholesale franchise group established to provide regional Australia with telecommunications services, including mobile, landline, internet, videoconferencing and data networks.

Community Telco’s franchise model allows local businesses in regional Australia to aggregate demand for telecommunications and create a ready made market.

The organisation was founded by Bendigo Bank on the philosophy that businesses in regional Australia require the same voice and data services as the capitals to be competitive – and for communities to progress economically and socially. Community Telco also aims to capture revenue from telecommunications spend, and reinvest this in creating jobs, company growth and to support the local community.

Community Telco is headquartered in Bendigo with eight franchise offices located along the east coast of Australia – including the Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, Dubbo, NSW Central Coast, Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and Launceston in Tasmania. The company has more than 150 full-time employees.



Community Telco helps regional communities harness profit flows and take control of their own capital.



CHALLENGE

An easy-to-use video communications system that would allow employees and franchise partners to conduct effective meetings and training sessions – without the costly and time consuming burden of travel.



SOLUTION

LifeSize Room and LifeSize Team systems deployed at Community Telco’s Bendigo head office and seven franchise offices across Australia. High definition picture and sound quality allows for productive meetings with natural conversation flow.



RESULTS

LifeSize systems has reduced employee travel time by 50% and travel costs by 60%. Staff use their time more effectively, with better work/life balance. Community Telco now sells LifeSize solutions to regional customers.



Challenge

In a typical working week, many of Community Telco's employees could attend up to 20 meetings – including board meetings with each of the franchise offices, new product launches, training sessions and sales team meetings.

Given the geographic dispersion, the travel burden on staff was enormous. To attend a face-to-face meeting with a colleague in another state, a staff member from head office would need to make the two hour drive to Melbourne, then take an interstate flight to Queensland, NSW or Tasmania. Given that Community Telco operates in regional centres, flights were often inflexible in terms of timing. As a result, employees were spending a huge portion of their time travelling between the franchise offices, with little time spent at their own office and home in Bendigo. In 2007 alone, Community Telco spent approximately \$350,000 in travel expenses.

While interstate travelling proved costly and time-consuming, meetings held over a telephone or web conference proved ineffective and tedious. The host of the call would have to choose between holding the phone while going through a document or narrating over a PowerPoint presentation – with little room left to interact with the other callers. Consequently, the ability to gauge the thoughts and level of understanding of those on the call were immediately lost.

David Joss, Business Development Director of Community Telco Australia, said that too many mistakes were being made using the old communication system, which was affecting the business.

"The problem with teleconference calls and web conferencing was that after the call, I would be inundated with questions I had already covered moments earlier. There have been instances where our sales staff misinterpreted the information that was given during a call and offered customers the wrong information, and eventually sold them the wrong products. The bottom line was that information was simply not being communicated clearly enough and the sales teams were not able to deliver quality service to customers."

Community Telco needed a way to bridge the gap between its multiple franchise businesses across regional Australia – without the costly and time-consuming burden of travel – to enable staff to communicate clearly with franchise partners and conduct productive meetings and training sessions both on and offsite.

To ensure the video communications solution was adopted by employees across the entire group, it had to be an easy-to-use system that would enable real-time collaboration as well as crisp, high definition audio and video.



Solution

Community Telco looked at numerous video communications solutions on the market and decided that LifeSize was the obvious choice.

"We built a business case around cost reduction and started to compare the different solutions. LifeSize came out on top in terms of being the most cost effective and had an impressive 6-month return of investment. There really were no solutions out there that could match," Joss said. "We were immediately taken aback by the high definition picture and sound quality of LifeSize's solution. We could have natural conversations and could see our colleagues and franchise partners crystal clear without any lag time."

Community Telco installed LifeSize Room 200 at its headquarters in Bendigo and LifeSize Team at seven of its franchise offices across Australia. One regional office was so impressed with the solution that they also purchased a duplicate LifeSize system.

"Our staff and partners are all thrilled with the simplicity and quality of LifeSize's video conference solution. They were able to pick up the remote control and within minutes, they worked out how to use the system," Joss said. "Even the formal training we rolled out lasted only 15 minutes, simply because everybody already knew how it worked."

"The number of impromptu videoconferencing meetings we've had since the implementation is truly amazing. Staff and partners just turn on the LifeSize system during meetings to get a point across or explain something visually. It has allowed our whole business to communicate a lot more clearly." The system was implemented in November 2007 and took 2 weeks to complete – with no hiccups along the way.





Results

The LifeSize implementation has enabled Community Telco to conduct a large number of meetings including training sessions over HD videoconferencing, reducing employee travel time by 50% and travel costs by 60%.

"We're now seeing colleagues around the office a lot more and the travel spend is looking better than ever. We actually did some calculations based on these numbers, and realized that it had only taken us six months to recoup the cost of our investment in LifeSize, through money saved on travelling," said Joss.

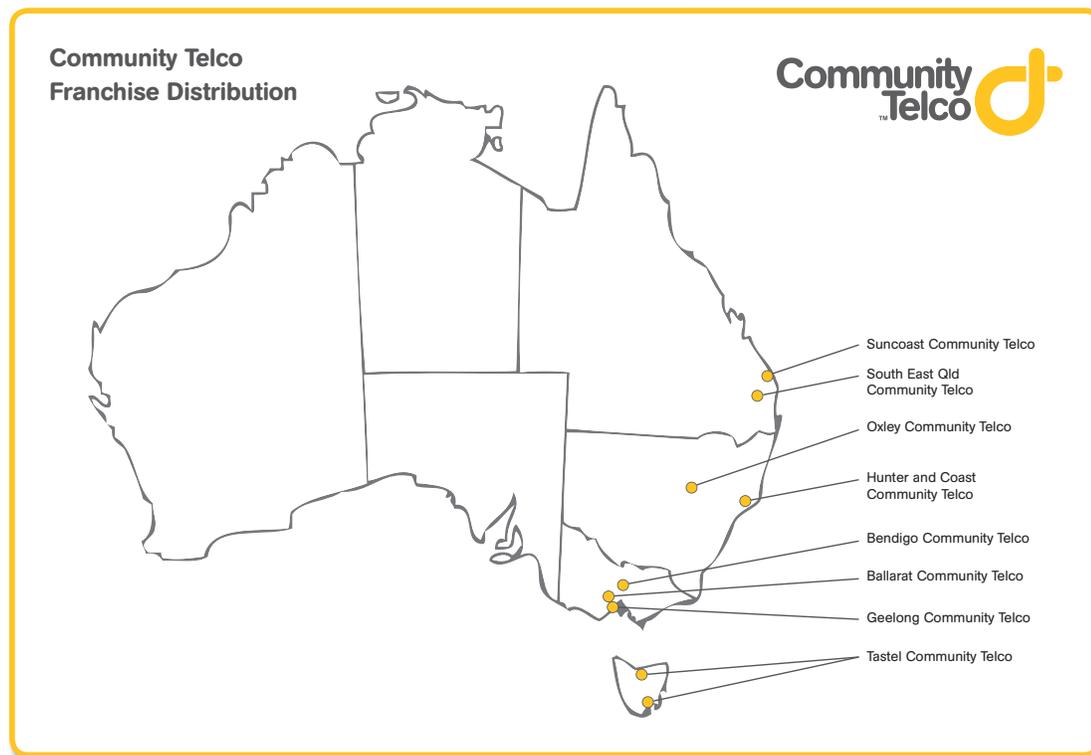
With travel time significantly reduced, staff have increased productivity and are delighted with the new healthy balance between their work and personal life.

"I can now arrange a training session at 8:30am and be finished by 9:30am. The days of travelling day in, day out are forever gone. I can now spend my time more effectively in the office and be at home on time for dinner with my family," said Joss.

Community Telco now sell LifeSize's videoconference solutions to its regional customers, as part of a package.

"The fact that we're selling LifeSize solutions is testament of our belief and confidence in the technology. We strongly believe that LifeSize technology can bring regional Australia together and give local businesses a competitive edge to grow their company and their communities," said Joss.

"LifeSize's videoconferencing system is very popular with our regional customers. They have told us that they love the ease-of-use of the system, the high quality of the picture and sound, and the low bandwidth. We couldn't agree more!"



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