

EPC UK Plc: Videoconferencing Saves Time, Cuts Costs and Protects the Environment

Leading commercial explosive manufacturer and supplier reduces travel costs and carbon footprint by utilizing LifeSize HD video

Organization

EPC United Kingdom Plc, Derbyshire, United Kingdom

EPC United Kingdom Plc (formerly Exchem Plc) was established in 1905 and is a leading UK force in the field of commercial explosives and blasting services. The company operates through four divisions covering explosives, blasting services, fuel additives and land management.

The EPC Groupe has a strategy of becoming a full service provider, which can be seen in the company's growing activities in the UK's quarrying, mining and civil engineering industries. Explosives and Blasting Services divisions offer a full service provision including consultancy, training and an integrated on-site blasting service. These services are supported by the supply of bulk emulsion explosives, through the Multiblend brand and a growing drilling and blasting provision.



Challenge

"The reasons for choosing videoconferencing proved to be pretty convincing," says Andy Wright, IT Manager of EPC, explaining the company's decision to install it across its European sites. With operations in the UK, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Poland, Romania and France, travel by the company's senior management was frequently leading to considerable expenditure on fares and hotels, together with unproductive time spent sitting in airports, planes and trains.

Reductions in all these areas were the key criteria for adopting videoconferencing together with the ability to improve the management of the businesses in their widely-dispersed locations. "The added bonus," according to Andy Wright, "is its beneficial impact on our carbon footprint."



CHALLENGE

Extensive travel between regional offices was time-consuming and costly. EPC UK needed a solution that provided superior quality, user simplicity and unprecedented price-performance.



SOLUTION

LifeSize HD video communications systems were implemented in key European offices for management, technical and health and safety meetings as well as external face-to-face meetings.



RESULTS

Better communication and significant reductions in travel as well as an expected return on investment realized in nine to eighteen months after installation.



Solution

LifeSize systems have been installed at each of the seven sites through authorized LifeSize reseller, Questmark Limited, joining three similar systems already deployed in France. Currently they are primarily used for internal, intercompany conferencing although they have also been used for a couple of external calls. However, the service rapidly caught on as within minutes of the system going live, a meeting was being held between EPC's local managers and their UK head office with Questmark on hand to guide them through call set-up and other procedures.



Results

In Romania, for example, Questmark sent their engineer to the EPC site in Cluj to install and commission the system. "It was a challenge," says Sam McMaster of Questmark Limited. "There is little experience of videoconferencing as a network service in the country and we had to ensure the right level of IP service was made available."

"There is no doubt that we are seeing a new type of videoconferencing user," says Sam McMaster "of which EPC is an excellent example. Often smaller organisations are intent on getting the most out of the service by driving its usage and, therefore, ensuring they achieve the promised return-on-investment."

After a slow start usage has grown mainly for management, technical and health and safety meetings. "Initially," says Andy Wright, "there was some wariness and scepticism about videoconferencing's value, but once people had used it and experienced its benefits opinions changed to one of acceptance, the general view now being that it will become an important business tool. Through the undoubted cost-savings and greater productivity we expect the payback period on our investment to be between nine and eighteen months."

From proposal to implementation, Questmark were very supportive over the five-month period of the roll-out of the systems. Two key reasons for selecting them were the provision of a number of demonstrations in both the UK and France; and their ability to organize and manage the installations in countries such as Romania and Poland. In addition, they are able to provide EPC with free multipoint conferencing facilities via Questmark's infrastructure.

In the future, EPC expects usage to expand to include regular customer and supplier conferencing.



"Through the undoubted cost savings and greater productivity we expect the payback period on our investment to be between nine and eighteen months."

- ANDY WRIGHT, IT MANAGER, EPC UK PLC



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