

When Air Travel was No Longer Cost-Effective, Leading Media Company Turns to LifeSize HD Video Communications

Quincy Newspaper, Inc, owner of 12 TV stations, 2 newspapers and 2 radio stations covering 13 US states, uses HD video to keep company connected and reduce travel

Organization

Quincy Newspapers, Inc. (QNI), Quincy, Illinois, USA

QNI is a family-owned media company that originated in the newspapers of Quincy, Illinois. The company's history can be traced back to 1835, when the Bounty Land Register was one of only four newspapers in all of Illinois. Over the next century, a number of mergers followed. In 1935, the Quincy Herald and Whig emerged, and it still operates under that name today. The company moved into radio in 1947 and began television broadcasts in 1953.

The story of Quincy Newspapers Inc. (QNI) is a tale of two families and five generations of leadership that nurtured a single newspaper into a multi-media company now employing more than 800 people and serving markets in 14 states.



QNI is a family-owned media company in the United States



CHALLENGE

The downturn in the economy coupled with a growing media organization, Quincy Newspaper, Inc. needed to find a communications tool that would rival face-to-face conversation, without the hassle or expense of travel.



SOLUTION

QNI decided that LifeSize was the best communications solution to meet their needs. A total of 16 LifeSize systems were deployed within QNI headquarters and regional centers, including LifeSize® Express™, LifeSize® Team MP™ and LifeSize® Room™ systems.



RESULTS

Improved communications among all offices, reduced travel and satisfied end users. QNI is now using LifeSize in the office -- weekly departmental meetings, HR and recruiting, training sessions and talent coaching.



Challenge

As a growing media organization with affiliates and colleagues widely dispersed throughout the Midwest, QNI was spending a significant amount of time and money on travel.

From 1995 - 2008, the company owned its own plane -- a King Air 200, which was utilized roughly 200-225 hours each year. But as the economy took a turn and budgets began to tighten, QNI executives realized they just didn't have a need for the plane any longer. The organization began to examine alternative ways to communicate.

What they needed was an alternative to travel, a communications tool that could keep teams connected while maintaining the same face-to-face interaction they enjoyed when meeting in person.

QNI had never used video conferencing as a company, although they had rented systems from outside bureaus to conduct job interviews in the past.



QNI's key needs included:

Superior quality: True-to-life, crisp HD video quality for meaningful, rich communication

Unique flexibility: Easy to deploy among all locations, simple to use, with built-in collaboration tools to keep everyone on the same page

Unmatched price-performance: High demand for video systems among offices means a communications system must make sense from an investment perspective

"After we sold the plane, we needed a more cost-effective way to communicate."



— BRADY DREASLER, DIRECTOR OF CAPITAL, ENGINEERING, AND FACILITIES



Solution

QNI conducted a thorough evaluation of several products on the market. After experiencing first-hand demonstrations of the other systems, QNI selected LifeSize as the best solution to meet their needs.

More than 16 LifeSize® Express™, LifeSize® Room™ and LifeSize® Team MP™ HD video communications systems were implemented in the main office in Quincy and regional offices around the country.

"We looked at solutions like WebEx, but meetings just weren't as productive as those on the LifeSize systems," said Brady Dreasler, Director of Capital, Engineering, and Facilities at Quincy Newspaper Group. "With LifeSize, you can pick up on things you just couldn't on the other products, like seeing line items, people answering e-mail at the same time, checking their blackberry, etc. Using LifeSize forces the discipline on the task at hand, and that's what's important."





Results

"The world changed in 2008," Dreasler continued, "and since implementing LifeSize, we've seen a quick ROI in our world."

Since deploying the systems, QNI has seen a tremendous amount of usage across all operations.

When all of QNI's TV stations ceased analog operations on February 17, 2009, the FCC required certain protocols to be enforced at very specific times. Using LifeSize, Dreasler and his team were able to meet with each of their 12 TV stations all in the same day.

"That was just amazing," Dreasler said. "We would never have been able to pull that off without people on the ground in each location."

QNI is also using LifeSize for weekly departmental head meetings, HR/recruiting training, remote job interviews and talent scouting. Some of the Directors of News in Quincy have the ability to use the video output on the LifeSize codec to connect to the production camera to see tests before airing.

As for the future – the possibilities are endless for use of the technology.

For on-location, recurring news segments, Dreasler says that the LifeSize system is far less expensive than a standard TV camera or microwave system. This way, the LifeSize system - which has more of an 'always-on' capability - can be deployed at a hospital or school where the reporter can simply walk in, turn it on and broadcast live in HD.

In the future, QNI's internal talent coach will be able to interactively train and prepare on-air talent.

QNI also hopes to create a more robust HR training program that will connect leaders in the organization with all 800 employees. In addition, Dreasler wants key vendors that QNI works with to have video conferencing capability.

"Using this stuff is addictive," Dreasler said. "We now have more conference room booking problems than ever before, which isn't a bad thing. Now, department heads can all be involved in making real-time decisions. Everyone is where they need to be all the time."



Quincy Newspaper Inc is home to the NBC, ABC, Fox and CW network stations across the Midwest US.



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