



Schüco Uses LifeSize HD Video Conference Systems to Optimize Communication Between Customers and Partners

LifeSize video solutions allow closer customer relationships and give Schüco a decisive competitive edge

Organization

Schüco International KG, Bielefeld, Germany

Schüco was founded in 1951, initially producing aluminum show windows and façade elements. Today, the company is a leading provider of building shells with a product range that covers not only windows, doors and façade elements, but solar solutions as well.

With branches in 75 countries, 5,000 employees and sales of around 2.5 billion euros, the medium-sized company from East Westphalia, Germany has truly established itself as a global player.



Challenge

Because the company has such a broad range of activities, Schüco's employees must be in constant contact with architects, engineers, construction firms, solar installation companies, investors and site managers from all over the world. Therefore, efficient communication is critical to the success of its business.

In order to solve this problem, Schüco's management team decided to take a closer look at video conference solutions currently on the market. The company already had some technical experience in this area, even though it was from the early days of video communication. Back in the 1990s, Schüco acquired an ISDN phone for testing and to form their own picture of the options out there. However, the use of the phone never moved beyond the testing stage. The quality of the small display was terrible and there were constant faults. The image was shaky, sound was lost entirely or was no longer in sync with the video signal.

As HD quality video became established in more and more areas of life, Schüco decided to tackle the issue once more and examine the newer technology available. The management team decided that the time was now ripe to communicate in top quality with many participants via the Internet.

Before selecting a suitable system, the façade specialist began a detailed evaluation process to compile their requirements in a performance specification.



CHALLENGE

Schüco was looking for an efficient, reliable HD video system in order to communicate with architects, engineers, construction companies, solar installers, investors and clients throughout the world.



SOLUTION

Today, the company relies on LifeSize® Express™, LifeSize® Team™ and LifeSize® Room™ endpoints in 45 countries, where over 60 installations are currently in use.



RESULT

Every department is delighted with the easy-to-use systems. Additionally, Schüco has been able to reduce travel expenses and conduct major international meetings involving up to 25 countries via HD video.



Solution

Schüco's main goal was to purchase an HD video solution that would work flawlessly in areas with limited Internet bandwidth. This issue was not limited to smaller branches in developing countries. Even in industrial nations, there are still areas where broadband access leaves a lot to be desired. In fact, even some areas at the company's head office are restricted to 1,000 kbps.

Additionally, a particular weak point in many of these problem regions are low upload speeds. Sometimes, they are restricted to no more than 120kbps, a bandwidth that many video conference systems cannot handle.

Extremely simple handling was also a top priority for the decision-makers at Schüco. Every employee should be able to start and participate in a video conference without the help of IT staff. To ensure that conferences ran smoothly, another requirement was that files such as PowerPoint presentations could be distributed and played in an elegant manner using the system.

Because Schüco's requirements were so specific and required a full range of solutions, the number of possible providers was quickly whittled down to only three, whose products Schüco then subjected to further evaluation. Only the solutions from LifeSize, a division of Logitech, proved to be thoroughly convincing. However, the features of LifeSize's systems were not the only appeal. The provider also offered the best value for money by some distance.

The company now uses LifeSize® Express™, LifeSize® Team™ and LifeSize® Room™ endpoints in 45 countries, for a total of 60 installations. All three products are excellently coordinated and meet their needs to perfection.

The first video meetings proved to be an unusual experience for employees. The benefits were revealed immediately and in the truest sense of the word.



Results

The initial skepticism has vanished and LifeSize is now embraced with open arms at Schüco. Today, demand is so great that meeting rooms with the LifeSize technology have to be reserved far in advance.

In fact, nobody in the company is willing to do without the benefits of videoconferencing. For example, management and sales teams use it to coordinate with the international branches, HR uses it to conduct interviews, and the commercial units even use it to communicate with auditors. All the departments are pleased when they can use the LifeSize system as opposed to an audio call.

HD video conferences have also led to sharply reduced travel costs for Schüco. In the past, whole working days were lost to travel for the company. The time spent in taxis, in the air and in departure halls simply could not be used productively. Now, the cost of the conference system was recouped after just one major international meeting.

Schüco is now advertising the benefits of the LifeSize system beyond its corporate borders too, using it to communicate with architects, customers and other companies in many cases. The more complex components of the Schüco product portfolio are much more effective in a video. Schüco can discuss objects, models and workpieces without any problem, allowing them to build up a much more intensive relationship with customers and giving them a decisive competitive edge.

The system's benefits are so convincing that he knows precisely where developments are headed. Schüco has clear ideas on the further development: to be easily reachable and in HD quality via the convenient video conferencing solution of LifeSize.



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