

Q&A with Zehnder Group

HVAC experts rely on Lifesize and Microsoft Skype for Business to seamlessly connect more than 2,000 employees worldwide.



Headquartered in Switzerland, the Zehnder Group is one of the leading providers of HVAC and controlled domestic ventilation systems across Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Benelux, Austria and Switzerland. We spoke with Ercan Yapalak, head of IT services at Zehnder, to better understand their collaboration challenges and their approach.

When did the Zehnder Group get serious about conferencing?

Our IT department spent years trying to crack the conferencing code. First we tried web conferencing solutions, but the results were unreliable at best. Then, about four years ago, we saw a significant increase in travel across the company. Our fleet of vehicles was always fully booked, travel costs were increasing substantially and employees were always on the move instead of working productively. If we could cut travel costs, we knew a high-quality video communication solution would be a smart investment.

What were you looking for? What were your deal-breakers?

We evaluated several video conferencing solutions from established providers—in fact, we carried out extensive tests. We found the competitors' products had blips and other artefacts in the picture or the video transmission was broken off completely. That was absolutely unacceptable. On the other hand, the Lifesize solution impressed us the most in terms of its price–performance ratio. We also really appreciated the special algorithm that flexibly adjusts the video quality to the available bandwidth.

What were your core considerations to move to the cloud?

First we used a hybrid solution, with Lifesize room systems installed in conference rooms across Switzerland, Germany, China, France and the U.S., as well as a leased multipoint control unit with Lifesize's managing software. Then, our needs evolved, and we wanted a more permanent solution that was easy to install while still being reasonably priced. We have very high requirements for security and stability; so much so, we originally intended to host the Lifesize solution in a private cloud. However, our evaluations found that Lifesize Cloud met all of our requirements without any of the responsibilities.



“Every employee can start a virtual meeting—with the highest video quality—without changing applications. This literally puts communication on a whole different level.”

Experience the power of Lifesize video conferencing for yourself. See what it's like to meet over video with anyone, whenever, wherever and on any device. **Start a Free Trial**

From a deployment standpoint, we wanted a service where every employee could easily establish a connection between video-enabled devices, from smartphones and laptops through to professional video systems for meeting rooms. Plus, we wanted any user to be able to set up the video connection and be able to invite any number of participants, without relying on our IT team. The Lifesize Cloud Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model only placed modest demands on IT.

What were your interoperability requirements?

With the move to Office 365™, Lifesize's seamless Microsoft Skype for Business integration became critical. Every employee can start a virtual meeting—with the highest video quality—without changing applications. This literally puts communication on a whole different level.

Last, Zehnder benefits from Lifesize Cloud's single sign-on (SSO) ability. Since we use Active Directory for user administration, we were able to seamlessly integrate Lifesize Cloud with our current directory during the installation.

When our company's Skype for Business integration is complete, we expect that every employee using the Microsoft communication platform will also use Lifesize for video at the same time. This means that more than 2,000 employees worldwide can start a video conference from their workstation, at any time, to anyone. This also makes collaboration with external partners who are using third-party solutions easier than ever.

Any final thoughts?

The more we use the Lifesize system, the clearer the benefits become. In terms of time and resources, staff deployment is now significantly more efficient and the employees' work-life balance seems more balanced than before. Personally, I often had to spend over three hours travelling to Switzerland; now I can now save this “dead time,” and the benefits for colleagues in countries farther north are even greater. Across the company, the feedback from the employees is also very positive. I've only heard good things about it. There are no reports of disconnections, and we're very satisfied with the quality.

Learn more

Hear how other customers are using Lifesize to transform their businesses at: www.lifesize.com/case-studies.

HEADQUARTERS

Austin, Texas, USA
+1 512 347 9300
Toll Free US +1 877 543 3749

APAC REGIONAL OFFICE

Singapore
+65 6303 8370



www.lifesize.com
E-mail: info@lifesize.com



EMEA REGIONAL OFFICE

Munich, Germany
+49 89 20 70 76 0
Toll Free Europe +00 8000 999 09 799

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