

Pearson plc – the deployment of Teliris' VirtuaLive

'Achieving improved operational efficiency and cost savings while making a tangible contribution to reducing its carbon footprint.' How Pearson has used technology to improve operational effectiveness and reduce the impact of its operations on the environment.

Introduction

Pearson is an international media company with market-leading businesses in education, business information and consumer publishing. With more than 29,000 employees based in 60 countries, Pearson brands include the Financial Times, Penguin, Dorling Kindersley, Scott Foresman, Prentice Hall, Addison Wesley and Longman. Together, the UK and North American markets account for over 80% of group revenues. The two most significant operational centres for Pearson are London and New York. This business spread has implications on where people are located. For example, corporate functions such as the Company Secretarial team have a presence in both centres.

Effective leadership of a global business requires effective communication between the company executive team. It is a business reality that demands on executive time are growing as are the pressures for ever more rapid decision making. Business travel and face to face meetings can only ever be a part of effective decision making.

As part of a wider corporate commitment to video-conferencing, Pearson has invested in the Teliris VirtuaLive system connecting its Head Office buildings in London and New York.

Making a real difference

Investment in high-end telepresence has had a major impact on how Pearson communicates. This year, the Pearson Management Committee which brings together the top-level senior executive team has moved to an arrangement whereby eight of its ten annual meetings are held virtually using the Teliris VirtuaLive system. Previously all these meetings were face-to-face.

This provides Pearson Executives with greater flexibility as well as avoiding unnecessary time spent in airports. In addition, the Teliris VirtuaLive system allows split functions, including the Company Secretarial team, to meet regularly and keep in touch where contact at short notice is required.

The main benefits of using the Teliris VirtuaLive system for Pearson have been:

1. Operational efficiency

Operational efficiency is boosted through;

- Having senior executives able to meet, across the world if necessary, within minutes –delivering more timely and flexible decision making
- Saving time by senior executives not being tied up in airport lounges

There is a direct financial saving too. If the meetings that have taken place over the last 12 months using the Teliris VirtuaLive system had instead been convened face to face, the cost to Pearson would have been substantial in air fares alone.

2. Environmental

Environmental responsibility is integral to the way Pearson operates. We have an Environmental Management System and set targets to reduce our carbon footprint. We have set a challenging target to achieve a per employee reduction in air travel by the end of 2006 based on 2003 figures.

Video-conferencing is one way to achieve this target. Video-conferencing can be an alternative to air travel and thus help us to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with our operations. The air travel equivalent of holding meetings face to face rather than using the Teliris VirtuaLive system would have exceeded 800 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO²).

3. Human Resources

The Teliris VirtuaLive system offers an alternative that empowers our people to choose the option that suits their work/life balance. Air travel can be the best business option, but Pearson has found that people value the freedom to choose.

4. Technological excellence

The Pearson IT dept is largely unaffected by the implementation of the Teliris VirtuaLive system in UK and US boardrooms and meeting rooms in London and Manhattan. IT front the delivery of the service through Teliris and we provide the network bandwidth that the service uses. The service is reliable

and Teliris are proactive in managing and improving the service. The Teliris system sets that standard by which all other video conferencing is compared.

The managed service delivered by Teliris has significantly helped the IT department by handing off the key parts of delivery the service to the experts.

A regular quality testing process is in place, which tends to identify most problems and issues allowing time for adjustments to be made prior to meetings. Local staff also validate that sound and audio quality is OK prior to meetings, though most problems are identified and managed remotely by the Teliris Video Network Operations Centre.

The VirtuaLive system is regularly used by senior company executives for day-to-day meetings; both small one-to-one meetings and for large formal events. Increasingly, the system is being promoted as a viable alternative to traveling.