



Little Diversified Architectural Consulting

Little Diversified Architectural Consulting uses video equipment installed by VSGi to collaborate among its seven offices nationwide, reducing travel costs and improving communication.

Challenge

As one of America's leading architectural firms, Little Diversified Architectural Consulting employs approximately 300 professionals in its seven locations nationwide. Chris France, the firm's Chief Information Officer, says that having its employees spread across seven offices "makes it difficult to collaborate."

"I've been on calls where we had to stop the meeting for 10 minutes so everyone could introduce themselves because they had never met face to face," he explains.

"For years," France continues, "We have been talking about improving our communications. When we initially set up the offices, they were pretty much separate, working on local projects. But over time, there's been a lot more inter-office collaboration – which is why we jumped into video conferencing."

Solution

After investigating various technologies, Little decided to have Polycom high-definition units installed in all its offices, including three rooms at its Charlotte, North Carolina headquarters.

"Once we decided on the technology," says France, "I asked the manufacturers to recommend a preferred integrator that could handle a seven-office footprint. I got good references on VSGi," a nationally recognized premier integrator of video, voice, web, data collaboration, and communications solutions.

VSGi installed Polycom HDX 8000L series throughout the firm's offices in Charlotte, Washington, D.C., Durham, Orlando, Dallas, and its two West Coast offices outside of Los Angeles, with the first room going live in March 2008 and the last one in December 2008.

"The installations were straightforward," France remarks. "We asked for the same person to do all of the installations, so they went smoothly. All our rooms have the HDX 8000 series with the 65-inch Panasonic Professional Plasma Single Screen, except our Board Room at headquarters, where we had a dual-screen system installed."



**Polycom HDX 8000L
65" Dual-Monitor
Wall-Mounted**

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Now, says France, "It's just easier to communicate, and video conferencing has helped build the team. It's ramped up to the point that we are using it daily because it is so easy. Even if people aren't on video calls, they are taking advantage of our investment in the 65-inch plasma display technology to go into the rooms and show their work."

France notes that while Little mostly does point-to-point video conferences, the firm also uses the VSGi bridging service "for important meetings. We have done a few seven-office meetings and it's like Hollywood Squares with everyone visible, and then the person talking gets bigger on the screen. It's really cool."

Results

In the short time that Little has had video equipment in all of its offices, says France, "The feedback is that it is awesome. It's easy to use – you just hit a button and you're connected."

"People are using it all the time and they love it," he continues. "And they are coming up with more creative uses. There are a couple of guys who are friends and they work in different locations, and now they have their morning coffee over video."

"With video," France adds, "we have better communications. And better communications means fewer problems for projects, and faster turnaround time. Also, you can't underestimate the human factor – video really helps with team building. It's a much better meeting with video. It's like the other people are sitting right there at the end of the conference table. The quality is great with high definition."

While France says the company has not tracked the cost savings due to use of video, "I do know that we saved \$3,000 in travel expenses for just one meeting."

"It's as good as a face-to-face meeting without have to incur the expense," he concludes.

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