“We know we can trust VSGi to help develop a roadmap for continued rollout of Polycom Video Conferencing Solutions across the organization.”

Connecting and Collaborating for a Cause
Non-Profit Overcomes the Challenges of Regionalization with Polycom and VSGi

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) is a non-profit organization committed to helping people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS). NMSS funds cutting-edge research, drives change and awareness through advocacy, facilitates professional education, and provides programs and services that help people with MS and their families move their lives forward.

In 2012 alone, through its national office in New York, two additional home offices in Denver and Washington D.C., and 50-state network of chapters, NMSS devoted $122.1 million to programs and services that assisted more than a million people. The Society also invested $43.3 million to support more than 350 research projects around the world.

Daily operations are carried out by a staff of approximately 1,200 personnel and over 500,000 volunteers, each of whom are passionate about moving towards a world free of MS.

To help NMSS achieve its mission, collaboration and open lines of communication across the organizations are essential. However, with its vast and disparately located employees, board of directors and volunteers, NMSS determined it required a new approach and a new partner.

**The Challenge: Shrinking Budgets and Greater Regionalization Hindered Operations**
NMSS employees and stakeholders work towards excellence, integrity and team work in all they do. However, with a growing focus on regionalization and shrinking budgets, NMSS needed a cost-effective way to communicate and collaborate across its diverse functions and locations.

As Don Mulvey, Information Technology (IT) Manager with NMSS’ Telecommunications division explains: “NMSS is a very collaborative organization, we strive to foster engagement in all we do – to accomplish this our employees and board of directors depend on open lines of communication across all our offices and chapters. At the same time, as a non-profit we strive to comply with a prudent system of checks and balances across multiple teams – so transparency in all we do is essential.”

NMSS quickly determined that it needed more than just point solutions to its communication and collaboration challenges, it needed a true partner.

**The Solution: Partner with VSGi to Implement Polycom Video Conferencing Solutions**
To achieve its goals and overcome the constraints of regionalization, in early 2013 NMSS began the process of soliciting proposals for video and audio conferencing technology from a number of vendors.

“We had a long relationship with Polycom but given the complexity of our infrastructure and our evolving needs, we were seeking a true business partner who could help us build and deliver on a plan of action – at the best price,” explained Mulvey.

On Polycom’s recommendation, NMSS reached out to VSGi: “After one conversation with a sales representative, VSGi literally blew me out of the water,” continued Mulvey. As its preferred partner, NMSS engaged VSGi to design, deploy and provide support services for a high-definition video and audio conferencing system based on state-of-the-art Polycom® technology.

VSGi recommended an integrated approach that leveraged a range of

**Results: VSGi solutions and partnership approach have enabled NMSS employees and stakeholders to connect and interact more efficiently while delivering greater transparency into operations, enhanced information sharing, and face to face engagement.**

**Customer:** National Multiple Sclerosis Society
**Location:** New York City, Washington DC, Denver, and Regional Chapters
**Challenge:** Overcoming physical, financial and geographical constraints to facilitate greater collaboration and communication across national non-profit footprint.

**Solution:** VSGi Video Conferencing Solutions

**Results:** VSGi solutions and partnership approach have enabled NMSS employees and stakeholders to connect and interact more efficiently while delivering greater transparency into operations, enhanced information sharing, and face to face engagement.
product and services including back-end solutions such as Polycom® RealPresence® Collaboration Server, Polycom® Converged Management Application™ 5000 management console, Polycom® RSS™ 4000 recording and streaming software, and Polycom Video Border Proxy (VBP) which provides NMSS partners and external constituents with secure access to NMSS' video conferencing network.

On the front end, VSGi deployed a range of high-definition video, voice and collaboration tools including the Polycom® HDX® 6000, 8000, and 9000 Series as well as the Polycom RealPresence® Group 500 – each of which is designed to provide optimal services regardless of distance, user skills, room or group size.

The Result: Seamless Collaboration, Communication, and Transparent Operations

Using the power of video and audio conferencing technology, today NMSS employees, volunteers and board members can now communicate and collaborate across geographical and physical boundaries, more easily and effectively. Some of the benefits realized include:

- Easier access to key decision makers, wherever they are
- Greater openness, transparency and compliance with internal controls thanks to an optimized exchange of information across disparate teams
- Enhanced collaboration between national headquarters, home offices and regional chapters
- Ease of facilitation of team building and employee development (virtual brown bag lunches between the Denver and New York teams are now a regular event)
- Reduced travel costs
- Increased decision making speed for management and board members

Mulvey credits VSGi with helping NMSS achieve its communication and collaboration goals: "VSGi with helping NMSS achieve its communication and collaboration goals: “VSGi has proven to be an end-to-end partner whom we know we can trust to help us develop a roadmap for the continued roll-out of advanced video conferencing services across the organization,” said Mulvey.

"With VSGI, you get what other companies boast about, but few deliver – responsiveness, quality, and a partner who is true to their word. Everyone we have had contact with, from sales to implementation and support, takes pride in their work,” continued Mulvey.

VSGi’s Vice President of Sales and Marketing, James Copperthite, added “With a nationwide network of 50 chapters - real time, face-to-face communication and collaboration is a key component in helping The National Multiple Sclerosis Society achieve its mission. VSGi is honored to play even a small part in helping NMSS realize such important goals.”

The Future – Polycom CloudAXIS

NMSS hopes to extend its investment in video conferencing technology to include Polycom RealPresence® CloudAXIS™ Suite, a first-of-its-kind video collaboration and conferencing software solution that would allow NMSS to securely extend access to its video conferencing network to anyone who has access to a browser and a webcam, a tablet, or smartphone. With CloudAXIS members and external invitees can participate in a Polycom-powered video conference, from home, or on the go – a significant benefit for NMSS regional personnel and those impacted by MS. It also opens up the potential for more direct communication and engagement with members and supporters, wherever they are.

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