

Insite Video Systems Case Study

Eat, drink—and video communicate

For Vancouver-based IVS, Polycom's ViewStation video systems provide a competitive advantage for restaurants and other entertainment companies while enabling customers to enjoy long-distance, face-to-face meetings for both personal and business purposes.

"We want to provide a high-quality video experience for people who want to visit with their loved ones no matter where they are," says David MacDonnell, president of Inside Out bar and restaurant. "We have customers from 7 to 70 years old just crazy about using this technology for something so fun and personal."

Insite Video Systems (IVS) owns Inside Out bar and restaurant in Vancouver, and is building a second establishment in London, but the company wants to offer its customers more than a place to eat, drink and be merry.

It also wants to give patrons a place to meet face-to-face in real time with friends, family and business associates who may be miles or oceans away. To do this, the company is building an interactive video communications network to connect thousands of existing venues around the world.

"We already have strong interest from restaurants and high-profile entertainment facilities on every continent," says Stephen Hayklan, IVS founder and CEO.

The first partner to link up is *Ciro Pomodoros*, in London's Soho restaurant. To deliver high-end video conferencing in each location, Inside Out and *Ciro Pomodoros* have installed the latest group video communications systems from Silicon Valley-based Polycom. Reunions, birthday parties, hometown visits and rendezvous can happen using giant, state-of-the-art plasma screens and Polycom's video systems, which are renowned worldwide for their high quality, ease of use and affordability.

"Just think about it," says Hayklan. "You can sit at a table and hook up to London through the screen right in front of you. You can control the camera, pan it around, identify someone you would like to talk to and start interacting with them face-to-face. Soon, everyone will be able to communicate like this with others all over the world."

“Until now, business-quality video communications has been the privilege of the boardroom. Today, we’re bringing it to the general public,” adds David MacDonnell, president of Inside Out. “We want to provide the same high-quality experience for people who want to visit with their loved ones no matter where they are. We have customers from 7 to 70 years old just crazy about using this technology for something so fun and personal.”

Entertainment aside, IVS provides additional revenue-generating opportunities to businesses that join the network.

Inside Out, for example, competes with 50 other restaurants, all within a five-minute walk.

“The interactive experience is tied to the theme of our restaurant and sets us apart from all the rest,” says MacDonnell. “It creates and drives business and we believe it will do the same for our partners. And scheduling videoconferences for individuals and businesses during off-peak hours enables us to sell additional food and beverages during normal off-peak times.”

Planning for such high growth and so many sites for video communications created special challenges and requirements for IVS. The ability to control the stations from one central, remote location was a critical factor. And the video communications units had to be easy to use for busy staff members focused on serving customers. IVS evaluated alternatives but the decision was clear.

“Polycom’s ViewStation video systems are affordable and overwhelmingly easy to use, and they offer amazing quality. The remote control unit is so simple to operate, and the system itself works on the Internet,” says Bruce MacDonnell, technology director for IVS, which plans to set up its entire worldwide network using Internet Protocol (IP). “From an engineering perspective, there’s not much I can’t do with this product. Polycom was the obvious choice.”

IVS is set to make a major impact on the world of entertainment. Worldwide partners such as restaurants, cruise ships and health clubs can benefit from IVS’ low entry-cost leasing while using video communications as a tool for creativity and marketing.

Inside Out also sees unlimited potential for promoting its own business with video communications. Business meetings using video communications can be held in a separate dining room with meals catered on site. An international disc jockey competition is planned, American Business English is being taught to a class in China, and a Bosnian family separated for eight years will reunite on two continents.

Using Polycom’s video equipment, IVS plans to cook up a unique dining and communications experience to people all over the world.