



Case Study: The Blackstone Group

01. AT-A-GLANCE

The Blackstone Group, a global private investment and advisory firm headquartered in New York, has nearly 600 people in 12 offices across the US, Europe and Asia.



Making HD Video Conferencing Part of the Corporate Culture

>> CHALLENGE:

For many years, The Blackstone Group had wisely embraced the use of video conferencing technology for strategic business meetings, effectively and efficiently linking executives and senior management with staff and business partners worldwide. However, Blackstone's legacy, standard-definition video conferencing technology offered less-than-impressive video and audio quality and suffered from persistent and disruptive BlackBerry interference during meetings. As a result:

- Users were dissatisfied.
- The technology had lost credibility among senior management.
- Utilization of the systems was low. The potential value of the technology was not being realized.

Blackstone CIO Harry Moseley was tasked with updating and replacing the existing video systems with a higher-quality video conferencing solution for six to nine meeting rooms in the US and Europe. Moseley looked at several high-end Telepresence solutions, but they were expensive, lacked versatility and provided little opportunity for customization.

After seeing a LifeSize Room system demonstration featuring high-definition (HD) video, Moseley called upon Providea Conferencing to learn how this technology could best be implemented at Blackstone. Moseley suspected LifeSize's sophisticated, HD video system would address Blackstone's needs and offer an outstanding price-to-performance value.

>> SOLUTION

Providea Conferencing initially installed several LifeSize Room systems in Blackstone offices in the US and the UK. It wasn't long before Blackstone's executives embraced the new, HD quality, and the use of video conferencing was again on the rise. LifeSize's exceptional audio and video quality, ease of use and value as a productivity tool so impressed senior management that video conferencing soon became part of the culture within the firm. It thus became obvious to Blackstone and Providea Conferencing that expanding video conferencing from a point-to-point offering to a full-blown enterprise solution would dramatically boost business productivity.

Providea Conferencing provided the expertise necessary to expand Blackstone's network of video conferencing systems. Additional LifeSize Room systems were installed in locations including high-end executive boardrooms, personal meeting rooms and offices, and the homes of senior executives, so that all parties could participate in meetings at any time from virtually anywhere. Providea Conferencing's expertise in systems integration and in providing video conferencing as an enterprise solution assured the implementation could be customized to cater to the needs of executive end users in a variety of locations and for a variety of applications.

Systems were set up to interoperate seamlessly over Blackstone's private network. Installations grew to greater than 50 endpoints in the US and abroad. Identical network infrastructures were set up in the US and the UK, including

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two 20-port Codian multipoint bridges, gatekeepers and gateways, allowing participants at multiple locations to simultaneously communicate and collaborate. With Providea Conferencing's high-touch implementation and support, a small IT staff within Blackstone now handles all system and network management.

One particularly interesting challenge with Blackstone involved a large conference room that seats more than 60 people and can be divided into three separate rooms. Providea Conferencing's solution involved designing and installing identical, individual control systems in each smaller room. Now, each room can operate on its own or, when opened up, as part of a large, expansive boardroom setting. Displays can be quickly and easily added as needed based on the number of meeting attendees. And when the room is used for large-scale video conference meetings, the integration of voice reinforcement technology ensures audio quality remains superior, without echo cancellation issues, for the far-end locations as well as between meeting participants in the immediate room.

>> RESULTS

When Blackstone conducts mission-critical strategy meetings utilizing the LifeSize video network, there is zero tolerance for failure. With an event as significant as a corporate IPO, video conferencing becomes instrumental in efficiently facilitating the process. Through the deployment

of this technology, Blackstone executives have unlimited access to each other and video conferencing has become the norm when doing business internally and with partners and clients.

Aging technology replaced by best-of-breed, state-of-the-art, affordable video communications products... Exceptional, HD video quality... Superior audio quality, enhanced and ensured by specially designed audio technology... A/V integration providing high-end, customized room design to meet the needs of every room layout and user... Secure and reliable network infrastructure and management, allowing for seamless and flexible site connections... A total enterprise solution, created to address specific needs and expectations... Customers asking for better and more useful business tools: All of these are reasonable demands that could be made by any number of companies using video conferencing.

Providea Conferencing: delivering the next generation of HD video conferencing, audiovisual and networked solutions.



"We have been very pleased with LifeSize Room and the value it brings to our organization, as well as the great support from both LifeSize and Providea Conferencing."

Harry Moseley,
CIO of The Blackstone Group



www.provideaconferrncing.com

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
Providea Conferencing
1297 Flynn Road, Suite 100
Camarillo, CA 93012
(877) 477-6843

EAST COAST HEADQUARTERS
Providea Conferencing
Two Adams Place, Suite 410
Quincy, MA 02169
(781) 843-6700