

lingua business

Reach Out and Touch Someone

By Paul Gibson



The slogan for AT&T has finally come true, and BBVA will be the first Spanish company to take it for a test drive. We are not talking about a new vehicle, but about the premiere videoconferencing system created by Cisco.

No more waiting in long airport lines, no baggage check-in, no boarding pass, no security checkpoints, no more changing currencies, and above all no packing! In fact, you may not even have to leave your office in Madrid to make it to a meeting in Sydney at 7:00 AM (4 P.M. local time), in Beijing at 8:00AM (2 P.M. local time), another in Tokyo at 10 AM (5 P.M. local) and have time enough to sit down with your colleagues in Italy at 11:AM, all in the same morning.

Sounds futuristic, but the future is now. Cisco systems has designed a state-of-the-art, high definition, crystal clear sound enhanced

videoconferencing system for international business executives. Telefonica will have the responsibility to insure the quality of the technology designed by Cisco for 8 different videoconference rooms around the world. Currently, the system is up and running in two meeting rooms in Madrid, and with other rooms located in Latin America (Mexico, Columbia, Peru, Chile, Venezuela and Argentina).

What is even more impressive than the technology itself is the amount of money the company is saving in air travel, hotel and meal expenses. The overall budget to install the new technology for eight locations came in at an astounding 3 million euros, while companies that already use this technology speak of millions of euros in savings. Cisco estimates savings of some 103 million dollars for its 100 clients that have already used the system, from airfare alone, counting some 12,891 flights avoided. This does not include the savings in time, payroll expenses, and other expenses incurred when an executive travels abroad.

The blueprint for each location is equipped with a multiple videoconferencing system, in which each participating conference room is identical: each one has an elliptic shaped table, with 3 screens located in the centre, to view the rest of the participants in the meeting. Users of the system say the experience is unforgettable. The new device creates a unique interpersonal communication experience -

sharing ideas in real time, in the same setting, in the same room.

They also highlight the quality of the sound system, allowing you to hear the slightest voice inside the room. No more whispering in your colleagues' ear allowed at these meetings.

The other important advantage of the system besides the cost savings, is the important growth of productivity. The company not only saves money, but also reduces turnover time in decision-making, in the innovative ideas that result from this cross-cultural experience, and the time/effort savings involved in international conferences.

Some say there is nothing like a face-to-face meeting. Cisco agrees and the system design clearly reflects this. Body language, personal rapport, dress and hygiene all come into play during these meetings, just as in a personal meeting with a client. The interaction is very similar and not distracting -all of the rooms are tailor-made and exactly the same to allow for fluid communications.

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