

VIEWPOINT



Neal Hemenover

VP OF IT, VEOLIA
TRANSPORTATION

Based near Chicago, Veolia Transportation is the largest private-sector operator of multiple modes of transit in North America, including bus, rail, paratransit, shuttle, and sedan and taxi services. Veolia Transportation is committed to setting the standard in safe and sustainable mobility solutions through partnerships with cities transit authorities, airports and universities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
please visit www.bluejeans.com

BlueJeans



Custom Solutions Group

Video conferencing: the tie that binds a distributed workforce

VP of IT says Veolia gets it done with low cost, flexible solution

What special communications challenges does a highly distributed workforce such as Veolia's pose for IT?

We have a very dispersed group, including corporate, regional and local organizations. We are in nearly 200 locations in North America and have a strong need to share best practices among our staff. We in IT see it as our mission to help facilitate information flows between corporate, regional and local teams. We are excited about video conferencing because it provides a more personal experience and can facilitate communication and help build trust among people in different parts of the country. It obviously has some key advantages over "normal" conference calls. And we needed a more affordable way to communicate personally other than getting on a plane.

Are there solutions other than video conferencing you tried previously to solve some of these challenges?

We tried SharePoint some years back to tie in some collaboration of sharing files through our business development team and some other departments as well. And it does an OK job, but it really didn't take it to the next level for us to be more of a driving force in enhancing collaboration and communication. Collaboration in words, in blogs and the like has been OK, but having that personal, visual communication enhances the process of sharing experiences and solutions, which is a key goal. We had a lot of meetings; we had a lot of conference calls. Now there's just this new layer of ways to collaborate and see each other and build intimacy with video that's pretty terrific.

Why did you settle on a collaboration solution from Blue Jeans Network?

There's a long list of vendors that I reviewed and tested. One thing that stood out with Blue Jeans is the multiple

modes of communication that allow you to connect specifically with Blue Jeans' particular cloud-based solution. I wanted my executive team to travel anywhere in the world and be able to do a video conference, not be tied to a specific type of technology or have to be in any specific room to do these kinds of things.

What else appealed to you and to Veolia?

Some people in our organization were comfortable using Skype, others with Google Video Chat or other cloud-based consumer products. Blue Jeans ties in all of these types of consumer products. Also, we have clients with more mature conference room systems in place. I found very few solutions that could connect to all these consumer and conference room-based systems other than Blue Jeans. And it is so very simple to use, even if you have never used video conferencing before. You just connect to an Internet browser and go, as long as you have a Web camera.

How has the Veolia staff responded to the Blue Jeans solution?

We started with a grassroots approach and a desire for more communication to allow workers to reduce in-person meetings by half or a quarter even. Our rail group stepped up and began testing Blue Jeans and really enjoyed the experience. Then workers started generating their own ideas of how to use the solution and get more workers involved. We quickly got started seeing a lot of usage of Blue Jeans!

What are the chief benefits you've seen?

Certainly cost savings, as we had hoped for from the start. But in an organization such as ours, we benefitted a lot from the additional collaboration, communication, problem solving and sharing of best practices among our workers. ■