

## SAINSBURY'S LOGISTICS DIVISION MIGRATES TO VIRTUAL PRESENCE ON IP TO REDUCE BUSINESS TRAVEL, AND WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY



### ABOUT SAINSBURY'S

J Sainsbury plc is a leading UK food retailer with interests in financial services. It consists of Sainsbury's Supermarkets, Sainsbury's Local, Bells Stores, Jacksons Stores and JB Beaumont, Sainsbury's Online and Sainsbury's Bank.

Founded in 1869, Sainsbury's now employ over 148,000 staff across the UK. With over 488 retail stores serving 16 million customers a week, it is one of the most recognised brands in the country. In addition to its retail stores, Sainsbury's has numerous corporate offices across the UK to manage its operations, logistics and merchandise supply chain.

Sainsbury's prides itself on providing excellent customer service and quality shopping experience, with products at fair prices.

### MOVING FROM ISDN TO IP VIDEO

Sainsbury's Logistics were already a video conference user with four locations each equipped with video endpoints connected by a dedicated ISDN network. Bridging services were provided by an external service provider.

However video over ISDN was found to be unreliable due to network bandwidth restrictions and, as calls were charged on a per minute basis, video conferencing soon became cost prohibitive. As a result, colleagues only used video communications on an ad hoc basis, primarily to conduct point-to-point meetings between locations.

In 2007, Sainsbury's Logistics made the decision to migrate its video communications facilities to Internet Protocol (IP) in the hopes of achieving more reliable and higher-quality video conferencing. After looking into available IP-based video conferencing services, Sainsbury's Logistics selected AVM and BCS Global to expand their video infrastructure.

Since the migration to Virtual Presence video conferencing on IP, Sainsbury's Logistics has seen a dramatic difference. The call quality is no longer restricted by ISDN bandwidth. Video conferencing has become an on-demand service that could be used any time for multipoint and point-to-point meetings with continuous presence and 24 hour customer support.

"We now have a very versatile facility," says Nigel Hough, Logistics Communications Manager for Sainsbury's. "We can hold simultaneous meetings, with 24/7 availability and constant connectivity. We pay a monthly managed service fee under one umbrella, so if I use 20 hours of it [Virtual presence] it doesn't cost me any more, whereas on ISDN the costs add up."

*When Sainsbury's Logistics Division enhanced their visual communications infrastructure by implementing the Virtual Presence IP collaboration solution, they improved colleagues' quality of life and reduced the length of meetings to enable faster decision-making.*

**Customer Name:**  
J Sainsbury plc

**Market Sector:**  
Retail

**Customer web address:**  
[www.jsainsburys.co.uk](http://www.jsainsburys.co.uk)

#### **Business Challenge:**

Sainsbury's Logistics Division was using video conferencing on ISDN which was proving to be unreliable and expensive. Video communications was used ad hoc in the company rather than as a tool to enhance their communications and collaborations.

#### **BCS Global Solution**

Virtual Presence video conferencing over IP

#### **Business benefits:**

- Faster decision making and improved inter-office collaboration
- Less travel between offices, better quality of life
- Cost savings and reliability of service
- Helps meet corporate-wide CSR (green) objectives

## FASTER DECISION MAKING AND TIME SAVINGS

Fundamental to Sainsbury's corporate principles is respect for individuals and ensuring a high quality work / life balance. Virtual Presence video communications has helped Sainsbury's Logistics to make this a reality for colleagues. Prior to the implementation of Virtual Presence, colleagues were travelling many miles across the UK to attend meetings, sometimes up to 4 hours for a round trip.

Now by using Virtual Presence video conferencing, colleagues can hold meetings instantaneously, and when they finish the call, simply get on with their work.

"Things happen much more quickly now," says Nigel Hough. "People can actually get off a call and get on with their actions rather than travelling back to the office. The time that colleagues used to travel to meetings is now being used to execute work smarter. Colleagues can now get home from meetings at a reasonable time!"

## CHANGING WORK PRACTICES

Video conferencing has also changed Sainsbury's Logistics work practice. It has forced colleagues to manage meetings differently. On audio conference calls people were typically distracted, and it was confusing as to who was speaking. However, video conferencing has forced participants to actively listen to the speaker.

For example, Sainsbury's Logistics found that a typical project meeting was taking as long as three and a half hours to conduct. By switching to video conferencing, the team covered the same content yet made decisions more quickly. As a result, the meeting was reduced to 2 hours because people were listening and there were no distractions.

## MEETING THE GREEN CHALLENGE

As a company that prides itself for services to the community and respect for the environment, Sainsbury's has strong environmental policies and objectives. Along with other internal initiatives such as commitment to selling fair-trade products, offers of free 'bags for life' for customers, and the 'Make the Difference' days to champion social and environmental issues - the addition of Virtual Presence video communications is another way that Sainsbury's is ensuring their own work practices meets their social responsibilities.

## WHY SAINSBURY'S LOGISTICS USED BCS GLOBAL

Sainsbury's facilities were managed by AVM (Audio Visual Machines) - specialists who design, install and maintain complex audio visual systems. As Sainsbury's had previously used AVM's services, they called on AVM to help expand their visual communications infrastructure. With so many internal communications systems migrating to IP, it was important to ensure the video service was easy to use, fully supported and worked seamlessly every time.

Subsequently AVM recommended BCS Global as a partner to provide a managed video service through the Virtual Presence application. Through this partnership both parties worked with Sainsbury's Logistics to understand their communications infrastructure, and to visualise how they wanted to take video conferencing forward. For Sainsbury's Logistics it was important for visual communications to have continuous presence, voice activation, 100% reliability, and simplicity of service. Virtual Presence was the solution that delivered on all this.

"It really helps to work with someone who knows what they are talking about - a company like BCS Global who knows what the client is after" said Nigel Hough.

## CURRENT APPLICATIONS

Since the deployment of Virtual Presence in February 2008, Sainsbury's Logistics has used Virtual Presence for a variety of applications including multi-location meetings for over 30 participants, in up to 8 locations. Team meetings are now held over video conferencing as well. Members can go to their nearest video-enabled office and dial into a virtual room specific for their team instead of travelling to the one location. Virtual communications is also used for quick personal one-to-one catch-ups. Rather than emailing or talking on the phone, colleagues are choosing to get together over video instead, making it more personal and collaborative.

## FUTURE PLANS

Over the next few months Sainsbury's Logistics will be focused on rolling out Virtual Presence to the remaining locations, which will bring the total endpoints of Virtual Presence to 14. They are also reviewing their legacy ISDN and ADSL systems. As the service is used more frequently, Sainsbury's Logistics will be looking for ways to enhance the application for monthly briefings, presentations, training, and DVDs.

*"It really helps to work with someone who knows what they are talking about - a company like BCS Global who knows what the client is after."*

Nigel Hough  
Logistics Communications  
Manager,  
Sainsbury's