

## CISCO HELPS ICU GLOBAL SLASH THE COSTS OF VIDEO CONFERENCING SERVICE AND DELIVER A MORE CONSISTENT QUALITY STANDARD

**Cisco Unified Videoconferencing technology is helping a small business dramatically cut the cost of video conferencing as well as providing a more reliable and high-quality service.**

### Repairing poor-quality video conferencing

ICU Global is a small, UK-based business set up in 2002 which provides a range of video conferencing services. The company – headquartered in London – has used Cisco Systems technology to develop an innovative solution to provide high-quality, global and multi-site video conferencing services at a significantly reduced cost.



Increasingly, both public and commercial organisations rely on video conferencing to manage business operations and communicate with staff, business partners and customers. But it is not always possible to guarantee a good quality service, with users experiencing video communications that are slow, interrupted or even cut out entirely. The problem is often caused when users try to hold video conferences that are carried over two or more network service providers as the quality of service can not be guaranteed.

Stephen Mckenzie, founder and CEO of ICU Global, says, “ICU Global saw Internet Protocol (IP) networking as a potential solution to poor quality video conference services. But one of the challenges we had was finding a technology partner that would help both by providing the technology, but also the vision to help us, until we contacted Cisco.”

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**CUSTOMER NAME**

- ICU Global

**INDUSTRY**

- Business Services/  
Telecommunications

**COMPANY SIZE**

- Small Business

**BUSINESS CHALLENGE**

- Implement video conferencing over IP across different network service providers
- Improve the quality of video conferencing services
- Remove cost and complexity needed to ensure stable video conferencing
- Make video conferencing more reliable for critical applications

**NETWORK SOLUTION**

- Cisco secure Unified Videoconferencing

**BUSINESS VALUE**

- Transforms traditional and expensive video conference service price plans
- Cost of a two-hour video conference now buys a month of unlimited use
- Makes seamless, high-quality visual communication simple and cost effective
- Enables services providers to add value to customers

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### Few vendors have Cisco's vision

“There were other vendors which we looked at, but we decided to work with Cisco because it was one of the few company's that could see beyond what's currently available and saw the potential much quicker than anyone else,” says Mckenzie. “Cisco was with us from the start and was prepared to invest in helping us develop this solution. With Cisco it was bit like Star Trek – going into a new era.”

ICU Global has used a Cisco Unified videoconferencing solution to develop the Global IP Index™, a worldwide patented method for providing a secure and reliable connection between different service provider networks.

ICU Global has deployed Cisco IPVC Gatekeeper, MCU and Bridge, along with Virtual Private Network (VPN) and Firewall technology at its data centre in London where it creates a bridge between any two or more service providers. By using Global IP Index™, service providers use the Cisco technology to remove all the network incompatibility and technical issues that can arise when carrying a video conference across two or more different networks. The Cisco technology means seamless, high-performance video conferencing between two or more points irrespective of number of service providers in between is guaranteed.

Global IP Index™ is especially targeted at audio and video conferencing communications because these applications demand a guaranteed high quality service, but it can also be used for data and telecommunications. As well as IP communication, Global IP Index™ can also support video conferencing via ISDN connection using gateway technology. Although ISDN is one solution to improving the quality of video conferencing, it is expensive.

### Cisco transforms video conference pricing

One of the key benefits that Cisco has helped ICU Global achieve is to dramatically cut the cost of its video conference communication service. Using dial-up ISDN services means that users have to pay by the hour. However, using Cisco Unified videoconferencing enables ICU Global to charge customers a single, monthly fee for unlimited use and virtually unlimited simultaneous conferences.

Mckenzie says, “With Cisco we've been able to transform the way businesses will pay for video conferencing. Take a typical video link between London and Hong Kong lasting for around two hours. This could cost around £500 for that single video conference. But with the Cisco technology, ICU Global would charge the same for a month of unlimited use over IP.”

In addition to the cost saving and the improved quality that the Cisco Unified videoconferencing solution delivers, there are other advantages such as being able to mix and match IP and ISDN platforms and mix and match different bandwidth with no service deterioration.

Elaine Wallace, managing director of Kerridge Media Services, one of ICU Global's customers, says, “One problem that can occur with video over IP, especially between network service providers, is that the sound and the picture can go out of sync. With Global IP Index, the synchronisation is excellent. It is particularly beneficial for lower bandwidth connections where video connection quality can vary tremendously.”

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**Stephen Mckenzie**  
Founder and CEO  
ICU Global

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Cisco Unified videoconferencing technology is helping ICU Global to make video conference links much simpler because it replaces any bridging that is needed between service providers. Some organisations get around quality of service problems by setting up special arrangements between respective service providers so that any technical problems between different service providers are resolved in advance. Apart from being expensive and time consuming, this is only effective if the organisation knows in advance who it plans to video conference with; it cannot be used for ad hoc, on demand video conferencing something that is becoming more commonplace.

It also means much simpler contracting for end users because they only need to deal with their existing service provider, who in turn uses Global IPIndex as the platform for reliable video conferencing to any destination.

The Cisco IP videoconferencing technology also makes managing the Global IP Index™ simple. McKenzie says, “The Cisco technology behind our solution virtually looks after itself. We do not need to employ lots of technical staff to manage the equipment and those we have, can do it remotely.”

Global IP Index™ is also an opportunity for service providers to increase revenue and add value to their services by using it to offer better quality video conferencing to customers over IP.

Cisco Unified videoconferencing technology is the cornerstone behind ICU Global’s innovative solution to improving the quality of video conferencing. ICU Global is already in the process of setting up direct links with a number of service providers and other organisations to enable users to benefit from Global IP Index™. For example, ICU Global has signed an agreement with Masergy, which provides network services to the US government departments and US financial markets.



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