

TANDBERG Customer Profile: Royal Doulton

Client: Royal Doulton
Contact: Shane Phillips
Title: Developing international communications for the 'most English' of brands

DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE 'MOST ENGLISH' OF BRANDS

Background:

The Royal Doulton Company is one of the oldest and best-recognised chinaware companies in the world and is considered to be one of the leading manufacturers of luxury ceramic tableware, giftware and collectables.

The company has established a number of strong brand names – Minton, Royal Albert and Royal Doulton itself – and has always been at the forefront of design and innovation in its field. It currently distributes its goods to approximately 80 different countries and is valued around the globe for its sense of heritage and 'Englishness'.

The Challenge:

Royal Doulton runs numerous different bases across the world that enable it to manage the global production and distribution of its products. These range from the head administration office in Stoke-on-Trent and a manufacturing plant in Jakarta to sales and marketing offices in the USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, Indonesia and Hong Kong.

The necessity to provide seamless communication amongst Royal Doulton's bases meant that employees were required to travel extensively and regularly. The importance of some of these meetings obviously meant the attendance of various representatives, however a large number of smaller meetings were found to be a drain on resources, particularly when employees were present when it was not entirely necessary. Royal Doulton therefore needed to find an alternative way of effective communication.

The company first sought a solution to the challenge through PC-based videoconferencing systems. However, employees found that this was not adequate enough to support the successful running of these meetings. For a start, the systems did not prove very reliable as the connection frequently dropped, making it impossible to have timely meetings. On many occasions, users were unable to get through at all. In addition, the sound quality was poor and the most significant problem of all was that it was difficult for untrained employees to use the system. The search was then on for a remedy that was efficient, easy-to-use and cost-effective.

The Solution:

Whilst formal videoconferencing solutions were considered the way forward, Royal Doulton wanted to choose a system that all areas of the organisation would be able to use and was flexible enough to set up on an ad hoc basis. The other criteria was quality and reliability, particularly considering users would be dialling in from locations across the world and had to be conducive to successful meetings.

After investigating a couple of options, the company decided to invest in TANDBERG videoconferencing systems and implemented the TANDBERG 800 models in the UK, Japan, Canada, Australia, USA and Indonesia in January 2000.

The TANDBERG 800 units were selected as they are portable, high performance set-top boxes, and as they are designed for small to medium-sized rooms, which suited Royal Doulton's needs perfectly.

In order to ensure that implementations in each country were consistent, Royal Doulton joined TANDBERG's global accounts programme. Membership to this programme meant that the company received a fully integrated programme for global integration - including purchasing, implementation, customer service and training. This meant that all of Royal Doulton's local needs were serviced as well as those at the higher global level.

The Result:

Videoconferencing has proved a valuable resource for the company and has been used widely across the business, from CEO level to office managers and supervisors. For instance, the administration hub in the UK uses the systems daily to maintain contact with offices around the world. Sales managers hold ad hoc meetings as well as formal reviews with international sites, most particularly the Indonesian manufacturing plant. The sales and marketing division have also started using the system for recruitment purposes, interviewing applicants in Japan for global positions.

The impact of videoconferencing has been particularly noticed in relation to internal communications. "Video has provided us with an additional communication channel and has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of our internal communications, simply as it has allowed us the option of face-to-face contact at the touch of a button", commented Shane Phillips at Royal Doulton. "The decreased need of business travel has saved us money, however the main advantage has been the impact on internal communication".

The use of TANDBERG's global alliances programme has also proved an advantage to Royal Doulton, as Tom Somborg, managing director of TANDBERG UK, explains:

"The sheer increase in number of multinational companies implementing global videoconferencing programmes led us to devise a comprehensive programme to meet all their possible needs. Multinational companies, such as Royal Doulton, are one of the main drivers of the videoconferencing market due to the way videoconferencing can improve internal communications, whilst also saving time and money. Royal Doulton's entry into this programme meant that everything, from purchasing advice to local implementation, was dealt with by TANDBERG and all implementations followed the same lines".

About TANDBERG

TANDBERG is a leading global provider of videoconferencing solutions. The company designs, develops and manufactures videoconferencing systems and offers sales, support and value-added services in more than 60 countries worldwide. TANDBERG is a global company with offices in the United States, Norway, the United Kingdom, Canada, China and Japan. TANDBERG is publicly traded on the Oslo Stock Exchange under the ticker TAA. For more information, please visit www.tandberg.net.