



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization:
Sinclair Knight Merz

Organization URL:
www.globalskm.com

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

The project was designed to address the following: provide our clients with the best available technical skills from wherever they were in the group; assist us in delivering projects on time; mitigate project risks and increase the value we deliver to our clients; reduce pressure on staff having to be away from home and travel; enable us to be more socially responsible and reduce our overall carbon footprint; and enable the ability to share work around our office around the globe to relieve pressures of skills shortages. Clients are increasingly looking to their service providers to provide more services in house, as a one-stop shop. In this sense, you can't have all your specialists in the same place so we needed an approach to make sure that our clients have access to these skills no matter where they are. The technologies that have been put in place are delivering measurable benefits, which indicate an early adoption of our solution. We now have over 5,500 hours or 3,500 video conferencing (VC) sessions conducted per month (excluding point-to-point sessions). This is an increase of approximately 350% on what it was just 12 months ago. Rather than shifting people to where demand is coming from, we are now able to shift work to where the people are and we are steadily growing our income generated outside the home project geographic centre. We have reduced our CO2 emissions through less travel, significantly contributing to our target of 30% reduction over the past 3 years. We have also offset our teleconferencing costs by 50% . Finally, our staff tell us they love the flexibility of being able to attend a VC meeting from the comfort of their home or office with a client or internal staff on the other side of globe.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

The technologies we deployed were Cisco TelePresence (Tandberg, Movi), Microsoft OCS, Electronic Smartboards, and ProjectWise for CAD/Engineering worksharing, all integrated into our IP-telephony and email platforms. Rather than a big-bang approach, we adopted a staged approach, introducing each capability gradually over a 2-3 year period. The biggest challenge was, of course, the behavioural change management aspects. We needed to educate our people on the cultural aspects in communication along with the technical training of the tools so that we could overcome diversity differences that are much more obvious through sight (VC) than sound (traditional teleconferences). We were fortunate we had sponsorship right from the top, with our CEO actively promoting and using the technologies for board meetings, shareholder meetings, management meetings and day-to-day use. We also appointed a full-time VT Resource Manager to promote worksharing and a VT Champion from IT to promote and support the adoption. Having said that, we also invested quite a bit of time in training our staff, developing job aids and portals where standards processes were established and helping staff become comfortable with using the technology. Technically, the biggest challenges we had to overcome was the many components needed to deliver a positive user experience, including overall systems performance, user-friendly and simple-to-use functionality and integration with other technology.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

It's easy to expect staff to just hop on a plane to another location to get their job done. We felt this is not sustainable in the long run, as it has implications on both our staff, their families and our environment. We needed an approach that supported our mission of delivering a positive and enduring impact on the world. In this way, we proactively support one of our core business strategies: "Great People and Great Capabilities." Our Virtual Teaming and Worksharing initiatives have allowed our 7,100 staff around the globe to easily connect, communicate and work with one another. We believe that if we invest in technology that enables employees to operate at their peak and collaborate with one another better, they will remain motivated and happy, and consequently, they will remain with our company for many years. The specific humanitarian benefits include: reduction of travel by staff; delivering a better work-life balance and integration; 5,500 hours or 3,500 video conferencing (VC) sessions conducted per month (excluding point-to-point sessions), thus reducing teleconferencing costs by 50%; enabling global reach to our clients and staff and overcoming cultural differences, as people can visually see each other's gestures; improved global reach and increased worksharing, with currently 68 active global projects. SKM has met its sustainability target, reducing carbon emissions by 30% per employee by 2011. This project has contributed significantly towards achieving this goal. In summary, it has enabled SKM to win more work by providing more services to our clients, helped deliver projects on time, mitigated project risks and helped mobilise additional resources to ensure we have the best available resources on our clients' projects. We believe a virtual teaming approach is vital to the long-term sustainability of businesses in a resource-constrained world.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

SKM provided building and engineering design services for the Dubai University Hospital, a state-of-the-art academic medical centre that will be the main tertiary care facility located at Dubai University Hospital. This hospital is a new tertiary care world-class patient care and continuous learning teaching centre. The 400-bed medical center, designed in collaboration with Harvard Medical International (HMI), is part of Dubai's overall vision to become a globally recognized center of excellence for health care delivery, medical education and research. It is being designed

to raise significantly the standard for multidisciplinary integrative care in the Gulf Region. Located within a low-rise, Mediterranean-themed, master planned healthcare development, this 18-story building has a contemporary double-skin facade and includes a three-level basement with parking for 2,500 cars. Medical care will be provided in a four-level podium block with bed wards located in the tower above. Administrative offices will be housed in a separate eight-story building to the south, linked to the medical block via a glazed walkway. SKM Philippines undertook a major support role in the design and documentation for the new hospital. Our building services teams drafted over 75% of all documentation on the project and were responsible for taking design from concept to final issue on the main tower building in all HVAC, Hydraulic and Fire services. The team was also responsible for reworking the design at the 70% stage to capture significant client-driven architectural changes, undertaking services coordination, rationalization and QA design reviews.