



Panasonic Powers Up HD Visual Communications System – Telepresence Options –
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By Brendan B. Read

Panasonic could not have timed the launch of its new Panasonic KX-VC500 HD Visual Communications Solution videoconferencing system any better. Introduced today at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, it may offer financial and in the wake of added air travel security procedures resulting from the botched bombing of Flight 253, personal relief that firms from expensive and environment-damaging business travel.

Panasonic says the product, which will be widely available spring 2010, will "dramatically enhance the distance collaboration capabilities afforded by conventional video conferencing systems, providing businesses and institutions with a genuinely viable alternative to business travel."

The new system may also shake up the videoconferencing marketplace, perhaps expanding it thanks to Panasonic's experience in making high-quality video and audio and the firm's size and brand familiarity. Sometimes it also takes having a big name to get buyers' attention especially for solutions that seek to get them to change how they do things. A CEO may be aware of some of the other suppliers but it is nearly certain that they have heard of if they do not already own a Panasonic and have seen and heard for themselves what the products deliver.

The Panasonic KX-VC500 HD Visual Communications Solution is comprised of Panasonic 50 inch Full HD VIERA Plasma TV, the codec, two HD video cameras, 360 degrees HD audio microphone, VPN router and an intuitive remote control, along with standard cables and accessories. It includes on-screen guidance and one-touch memory keys for frequent meetings and also includes both on-site and remote technical support from Panasonic.

"The video and sound quality is truly impressive [with the new solution]," says Bill Taylor (News - Alert), president of Panasonic System Networks Company. "You get a fabulous picture along with a smooth, natural conversation that is never clipped or hollow. This is not just a conference phone with video. It's a whole new collaborative experience that will make you feel like you're truly in the same room with your remote colleagues."

What makes the Panasonic system, which is being positioned under the banner of "Business Without Boundaries," stand out are two features. The first is H.264 video compression technology and requires roughly half the bandwidth of competitive systems.

The second and more important says Panasonic is the video system's flexibility and scalability. The system allows for full HD images to be displayed on a wide range of HD monitors, from desktop LCDs to a 150" HD Plasma, or even projected with an HD projector on a large screen at a conference presentation or an educational institution. It also allows for multiple HD cameras to be utilized, so a second camera can be used to zoom in and share detailed images such as solder joints or chips on printed circuit boards, manufacturing lines, or even close-up details during medical procedures. A third option allows full-motion, high-resolution video to be transmitted over the system from laptops connected to the system.

"The extraordinary resolution of this system allows you to share details that can't be easily seen with the naked eye, even by people who are present in the same room," said Taylor. "Imagine a medical professional being able to collaborate with a remote expert on a difficult patient diagnosis that would otherwise require an in-person evaluation. Or an engineering team being able to share the finest details of a design or schematic with a remote production team. We really feel the mobility provided by our secondary portable HD cameras and the scalability of this system are potential game-changers for a variety of applications, opening up



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a broad spectrum of new collaborative possibilities in healthcare, education and manufacturing, to name just a few."
