CASE STUDY

How DDB Mudra Introduced VC-on-mobile

A case study on Mobility in Services

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This has enhanced their relationship with clients and set them apart in the industry.

Executive summary

Video-conferencing is yesterday's news. VC-on-mobile is the tech of the future. But the CIO of DDB Mudra Group is doing it here and now.

New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Vizag, Trivandrum. If this list is exhaustive to read, imagine how taxing it'd be to travel.
For Sanjay Panday, SVP-account management, DDB Mudra Group, shuttling between these cities is an occupational hazard. And an expensive one to boot.
But it was a hazard that videoconferencing nullified. No, not your vanilla videoconferencing, we're talking about VC-on-the-iPhone kind. In other words, VC on your mobile, when you're mobile.

Arguably, a first in the VC world, the project is the brain child of Sebastian Joseph, president-technology and FM, DDB Mudra Group. The solution provides anytime, anywhere VC capability on smartphones like the iPhone, and devices like the iPad, tablets and other Android OS devices.
In a country where there aren't many takers for a technology like VC, Joseph has leapt many steps ahead.

You See, I See, VC

Not one to shy away from the untried and untested, Joseph has always been among the early movers. Be it his Facebook-like enterprise social media platform or the company's journey to the cloud.

With that track record, it should come as no surprise that Joseph created the possibility of doing VC on a mobile phone and a laptop.
Conventional wisdom has it that VC is only used via hard end-points—like desktops at the low end of the spectrum to a dedicated boardroom setup with HD cameras. But Joseph doesn't think so. He felt that traditional VC denies access to the rank and file of the company who directly engage with clients.
 By enabling VC on soft end-points like laptops, and mobiles, he wanted to make VC a way of life at Mudra. "I wanted to make VC a regular practice at DDB Mudra and not reserve it only as a privilege of senior management. I wanted it to become the most preferred method for communicating with clients," says Joseph.

To be able to do that, Joseph had to ensure that the solution is easily accessible through the Internet and interoperates with other vendors for both incoming and outgoing calls, It should also have the ability to share content—like presentation files and documents—for geographically scattered clients. He wanted to add a unique feature to the VC stack: Give users the flexibility to invite other users who do not have a VC infrastructure.
In Joseph's mind, the VC tool was not just a means to save travel costs or provide ease of use. It was to create a never-had-before experience that would provide DDB Mudra with a competitive edge.

It was a tall order.

On the Go

VC on the move can be a long row to hoe. Most available solutions didn't meet Joseph's needs. "They required dedicated end-points, dedicated bandwidth, were expensive and

lacked mobility features. They defeated the very purpose of a mobile VC," he says.

But Joseph found a winner in no time—a US-based VC company called Vidyo. The solution supported multiple end-points. It was easy to configure and user friendly.
What's more? It can also be deployed as a private, public or hybrid cloud. "The infrastructure is completely transparent to end users. This delivers cost savings in traffic localization, Internet firewall traversal, and the ability to scale from a handful to thousands of concurrent multi-point connections," says Joseph.
The company has currently deployed the solution on an on-premise model. This will shift to a cloud model once it commences its shared services for the DDB Worldwide network, says Joseph.

The Vidyo central servers Vidyo One and Vidyo Gateway are implemented at DDB Mudra's headquarters in Mumbai. They can connect to the existing VC setups at all those locations. The solution provides the flexibility to have both in-room and mobile conference. Vidyo Portal provides a Web-based environment that allows end users to access and administrators to manage the Vidyo Conferencing system. The user interface features a single click action button to initiate a meeting–via the Web—from anywhere.
Now for Joseph's most sought after benefit: It is possible to invite guest users to your meeting room by simply sending them the URL of your meeting room. All users including guest participants can share their presentations, documents and other content with all the others in a meeting. This feature gives the company a competitive edge as it gives DDB Mudra's clients the flexibility to connect from anywhere—even if they do not have a VC infrastructure.

"Once a client told us that he doesn't have a VC infrastructure. We made him a guest user. The client was enthused that he can do the meeting sitting at home," says Joseph.
It's Like Being There

If ROI is the barometer by which the success of an IT project is measured then this project has been a quick success. VC on the move has evolved as a very effective and frugal spending tactic. Post-implementation all monthly review meetings, client meetings and recruitment interviews happen on this platform. "Hiring processes can be lengthy and costly especially when candidates are located in other cities or when multiple people are involved in the interview process. We have reduced expenses and time by conducting interviews on VC, thanks to the guest user feature," he says.

It has trimmed travel costs significantly. Earlier the company incurred Rs 1,60,000 on travel for each monthly review meeting. On an annual basis they spent close to Rs 20 lakhs. Now that cost has optimized.

The VC platform has quintupled productivity across dispersed workforces. Today, decision making is faster, projects are completed sooner, and several manhours are saved.

From January to May 2012, there were 1,467 video conferences using the VC platform, saving 564 manhours.
But the most strategic benefit is that DDB Mudra's employees are always available to their clients. This has enhanced their relationship with clients and set them apart in the industry.

DDB Mudra's Mobile VC has given the world a glimpse of the future where distances are irrelevant.