

AliceStreet Conference Center

A **real** conference room on your desktop

Implementation success story

Balfour Beatty Utilities

Balfour Beatty Utilities turns to the AliceStreet Conference Center to reduce costs and improve operational performance and safety

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Reducing travel for key Safety team meetings

Balfour Beatty Utilities, a subsidiary of the GBP 3 billion Balfour Beatty plc group, is a leading service provider to the UK utilities sector. With operations nationwide, Balfour Beatty Utilities – among other activities – repairs and maintains 21,000km of sewer network; maintains water or wastewater services to 4 million homes and businesses; and repairs and maintains 31,000km of water mains network (a distance that would circle the globe if layed end-to-end.)

**Balfour Beatty
Utilities**

www.bbul.co.uk

Balfour Beatty plc

www.balfourbeatty.com

Savings on “time and expense”

Brent Mitchell, Services Director for Balfour Beatty Utilities, counts among his responsibilities the safety of all of the company’s operational activities. Given the nature of these activities safety is of paramount importance, and Mitchell’s Safety team has representatives in each of the company’s operating regions. “We turned to the AliceStreet Conference Center to help us save the time and expense involved in members of the team travelling long distances to attend our regular scheduled meetings” he says.

Previously, Safety team members used to travel from their home territory to a central location for these meetings. Even for a domestic business, many of the team members needed expensive overnight accommodation before or after the meeting, and the cost and operational inefficiency of having team members on the road for such long periods was proving to be a major headache.

Improved day-to-day efficiency

With the regular Safety team meetings now scheduled using the AliceStreet Conference Center instead, Mitchell has been able to realise real cost savings both from reduced direct travel costs, and from improved use of the team members’ time.

But, says Mitchell, “What we’ve found is that not only are we making those direct savings, AliceStreet is also helping the team get together in an ad-hoc fashion much more frequently than we used to – allowing us to act more efficiently and work together more effectively on a day-to-day basis.”

***Working together
“more effectively on
a day-to-day basis”***

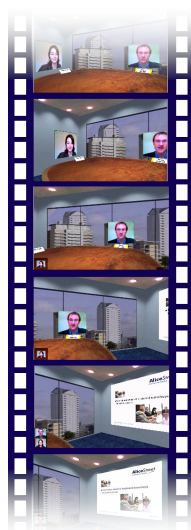
Using the AliceStreet Conference Center is so easy that when an unexpected operational situation arises, it’s simple to get 3 or 4 of the key players together on short notice to make sure that action can be taken quickly and effectively – without a long series of individual phone calls among each of the relevant people or a stream of inconclusive emails.

Simplicity for the IT department too

Not only is the AliceStreet Conference Center easy to use – it’s easy and inexpensive to deploy as well. As Head of IT at Balfour Beatty Utilities, Richard Jagger, says: “with the AliceStreet software, we’ve been able to deliver immediate business benefits into our operating division without the need for infrastructure investments beyond a PC to run the application and a handful of £30 cameras and headsets.”

This experience parallels other companies’ experience of deploying the free limited-period evaluation version of the AliceStreet Conference Center which is available to download from AliceStreet’s website at www.alicestreet.com. Michael Colucci, VP of Architecture, Engineering and Support for Pearson Technology (Pearson plc’s IT services group), told AliceStreet that “within an hour of asking [my team] to download the demo, I was successfully holding my first conference.”

A compelling new application



The AliceStreet’s unique conferencing features use Voice over IP technology to make it really easy and intuitive to hold team meetings when the participants are unable to be in the same place. It allows the meeting participants to get a real sense of meeting and communicating at a genuine, interpersonal level – all without even leaving their desks. Boston-based teleconferencing analysts Wainhouse Research (www.wainhouse.com) say: “The AliceStreet Conference Center is a conferencing tool which allows people to hold distributed meetings in a truly easy, intuitive way...AliceStreet is really a different paradigm” (*Wainhouse Research Bulletin, 19th April 2004*).

These unique features and unique approach are hard to describe but simple to install and use and simple to demonstrate – to see a brief recorded meeting held using the AliceStreet Conference Center, visit www.alicestreet.com and click on “Watch the demo”.

Deployed as a simple software application, without the need for extensive infrastructure support, the AliceStreet Conference Center provides instant business benefit at low implementation cost. As Balfour Beatty Utilities’ Richard Jagger says: “The AliceStreet Conference Center is the first compelling reason we’ve had for deploying Voice over IP technology.”

“The first compelling reason we’ve had for deploying Voice over IP technology”