Case Study: Schneider Electric

Kollective Helps Schneider Transform Company Culture Using Live Video

Schneider Electric, headquartered in Paris and Hong Kong, is the global specialist in energy management and automation. With a long and rich history spanning over 180 years, Schneider has grown tremendously from its roots in the iron and steel, heavy machinery, and ship building industries. Today, with over 180,000 employees across 100 countries, and revenue of €27 billion in 2015, Schneider is focused on developing connected technologies and solutions to manage energy and process in ways that are safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable.

Inefficient, Expensive Communication Model

As a large global company, Schneider has found it imperative to bring its executives together for a yearly corporate strategic planning event known as the Leadership Forum. The goal of the Leadership Forum is to get management aligned to help communicate company strategy to all employees across the globe. In the recent past, this meant flying around 1000 of their top leaders into a major European city for the on-site event.

While the on-site event was successful in some ways, it was also becoming cost-prohibitive to continue to fly in and host the executive team for several days in one location. In addition, Schneider realized it was an increasingly inefficient way to communicate company strategy. Because only a small fraction of the employees was physically present for the event, a large percentage of the employees were excluded from hearing the message firsthand. Between time delays and the trickle-down effect, much of the message and momentum was lost by the time it reached most employees. In addition, because they could not participate directly in the event, Schneider was missing out on a crucial opportunity to engage with the majority of their employees.

Schneider has such an established history and has shown a remarkable ability to grow and evolve with the times, which has contributed to their longevity. In order to successfully compete with other top companies and continue to attract
new talent and retain existing employees, Schneider sought out a new method to better communicate their corporate strategy and engage all employees worldwide simultaneously. This meant taking the Leadership Forum online to create an inclusive and engaging live video event for 2015. The new concept for the Forum was to produce a high quality digital production similar to cable television. The format would be similar to a dynamic sports or news show with different speakers and locations.

**Kollective SD ECDN, Network Readiness Test, and Kontiki MediaCenter Selected as Solution for Digital Leadership Forum**

Schneider chose to work with Kollective Technology, Inc. to help realize their goal of creating a truly innovative digital Leadership Forum. The solutions used included the Kollective Software-Defined Enterprise Content Delivery Network (SD ECDN), Kollective Network Readiness Test, and Kontiki MediaCenter. Kollective SD ECDN was used to stream the highest quality live video to all Schneider's employees without impacting their network; Kollective Network Readiness Test was used to assess network impact and performance prior to the event; and Kontiki MediaCenter was used as the portal through which employees experienced the live event.

Stakes were high when Schneider decided to transition to a digital format for their Leadership Forum. In order to make a big splash and get employees behind the transition, Schneider needed a solution they could trust to get the job done. Kollective was selected based on their track record. Established in 2001, Kollective has delivered video to millions of enterprise desktops and in 2014, experienced a 100 percent customer renewal rate for their industry-leading solutions.

**Kollective SD ECDN**

Because Schneider has employees all over the world, they needed a solution that could efficiently deliver their live video event at scale with a high-quality viewing experience for every employee, without bringing down the network.

Kollective SD ECDN offered Schneider the requisite high-quality delivery assurance through its software-defined overlay that sits on top of a company's existing network, without the need for new hardware. With the Kollective SD ECDN, endpoints become part of an intelligent grid, together creating a distributed “brain”. Kollective orchestrates content distribution throughout the network, automatically adapting to changing networking, computing, storage needs and other constraints. The overlay minimizes the bandwidth needed by only requiring one stream across wide area network links and Internet gateways, routes traffic around problem spots and protects the network by diffusing overloads and preventing bottlenecks from forming.
Kollective SD ECDN can effortlessly reach all endpoints in every location, enabling end-to-end delivery with no exceptions or exclusions. It can also be deployed very rapidly, expanded with minimal effort, and upgraded automatically.

**Kollective Network Readiness Test**

Because the digital event was new for Schneider, they wanted to make sure they did things right the first time, so that all employees had a positive first experience with the revamped Leadership Forum. In order to assuage any reservations they had about the event’s success, Schneider decided to use the Kollective Network Readiness Test to prepare for the actual event.

The Kollective Network Readiness Test let Schneider replicate the audience size, time and video specs of their live video stream. The test streams a video in the background to the audience specified. This is not a simulation, but a real test that is actually running an exact replica of the upcoming event.

Then, through detailed reports, the Kollective team can pinpoint offices or users that could experience problems in an actual live video stream event, and work with IT to resolve the issues. The Network Readiness Test provided Schneider with visibility into any network issues and control over the outcome of the multiple streams of the event.

**Kontiki MediaCenter**

Schneider opted to use Kontiki MediaCenter as the portal for their live event. Kontiki MediaCenter enabled them to create a brandable and customizable portal for their Leadership Forum. It offered the feature alignment they were looking for, including ease of use and engagement capabilities.

Using Kontiki MediaCenter, Schneider was able to provide users with a link on their website home page and employees could simply click on the link to start the event. Kontiki MediaCenter was also appealing due to its built-in authorization and authentication through SAML groups, for a highly secure and scalable solution.

**2015 to 2016 and Beyond**

Schneider’s first Leadership Forum event using the Kollective solution was in 2015. Leadership Forum 2015 was broadcast to employees across 55 countries to 465 sites reaching 35,000 live viewers. The event was received so positively that Schneider decided to repeat it for 2016. The major difference in the approach for 2016 was that Schneider allowed themselves more time to prepare for the big day to ensure the event went as smoothly as possible. After the 2016 Leadership Forum surpassed all expectations, Schneider considered how to replicate their winning strategy for other
events throughout the company.

**Schneider Embraces Video Culture, Becomes Communication Innovator**

The success of both the 2015 and 2016 events was a direct result of a hardworking and sustained collaboration between many organizations within Schneider, along with their partner, Kollective. The 2015 event represented a major paradigm shift in how the company approached employee communications and engagement. The technology partnership with Kollective helped Schneider embrace a direct, inclusive, and engaging method of communication using live video.

“While the cable television production quality and the reliability of the stream are important to us, the fact that we are now able to reach all our employees at the same time is truly priceless. By moving to a digital forum, we have been able to bring the management team and our employees closer together and eliminate weeks of seemingly unproductive time spent distilling our corporate strategy and messaging across the company. We have now made this communication format the default solution for large-scale communication with our employees. Since the 2015 Leadership Forum, hundreds of live broadcasts have been executed across the company.”

Torsten Raak  
SVP of Experience Marketing, Schneider Electric

**Business Benefits**

- **Employee Reach** - By moving to a digital Leadership Forum, Schneider was able to directly reach many more employees. Prior to the 2015 event, the Leadership Forum was limited to 1000 of the top executives. The 2015 event enabled the company to reach 35,000 employees for the live broadcast. In 2016, the number of employees viewing the live broadcast nearly doubled to
reach approximately 60,000.

- **Cost Reduction** - The move to a digital event was also dramatic from a cost perspective. Because the company no longer needed to transport and host all executives in Paris, there was a 10x reduction in cost.

- **Engaged Employees** - The new format created an environment where employees felt empowered and engaged. Users were active on Spice, the company’s internal social network during the event, uploading selfies, posting content, and liking contributor posts. The post-event response from Schneider’s employees was fantastic. Comments about transparency, speaking directly to employees, having everyone on the same page, showing passion and teamwork dominated the post-event commentary. Survey results indicated that the overall assessment of the event was 4.02 out of 5 and 4.04 out of 5 felt their expectations of the event were met.

- **Video-Prepared Executives** - As executives planned for and completed the 2015 and 2016 events, they became more “video-prepared”. Live video is no longer an afterthought, but is an expectation of their leadership. Live video, along with recorded video, is now an integral part of their corporate culture and overarching communications plan.

**IT Benefits**

- **Reduction in Support Cases** - 2015 saw some issues and cases opened, being that this was the first time Schneider conducted a live event of this magnitude. The Kollective solution enabled the flexibility and redundancy to deal with these issues. In 2016, with a steady partnership between the two companies and a lot of hard work, the number of cases dropped dramatically from 2015.

- **Network Issues Prevented** - By using the Kollective Network Readiness Test, Schneider was able to anticipate any network issues and make necessary accommodations to place a realistic load on their network. Working with Kollective, Schneider ran 20 tests in the seven months leading up to the 2016 event. They performed 4 tests the week of the event. Through this process, Kollective identified a number of issues on the Schneider network, including a firewall issue in China and a buffering issue the day of the event. On the day
of the event, the Kollective team was able to make configuration changes to address the network issue identified by the Network Readiness Test.

- **High Quality, Flexible Delivery** - In 2016, using the Kollective solution, Schneider was able to offer high quality delivery to all employees without negatively impacting their corporate network. Schneider and Kollective defined 100 different localities and assigned appropriate bitrates for some, while in other localities, the Kollective agent could select the highest bitrate for the particular network condition. For example, the Kollective SD ECDN enabled Schneider to cap the bitrate for China because of potential capacity issues, while in France, no cap was put in place and the Kollective agent used its inherent intelligence to select the appropriate stream for that, and other, regions.

**Next Steps: Making Video Pervasive**

Today, Schneider continues their quest to use live video as an essential part of their communications strategy. It is not just a mechanism for the Leadership Forum, but something that other groups in the company are embracing outside of corporate communications and for other use cases. For example in Brazil, as part of the company’s learning week, Human Resources is using live video for employee training. The company has completed 68 live events globally in the past year and has reached over 75,000 employees.

As the company looks to the future, they plan to incorporate 360-degree video to increase the interactivity and engagement of the experience. In addition, they are interested in web conferencing extensions to effectively broadcast a web conference or collaboration to a larger group. Finally, they seek to continue to innovate their live video experience for the 2017 Leadership Forum, and explore new uses of live video for external events, such as a recent digital partner event they produced using the Kollective solution.