



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Aethra and Clementoni

Clementoni is the largest manufacturer of toys and puzzles in Italy with over 40-years experience in the market. The Clementoni brand of products is translated into 16 different languages and distributed in 56 countries worldwide.

Headquartered in Italy, the company has four overseas offices in Germany, Spain, France and Hong Kong. The company has comprehensive coverage of the international market thanks to its extensive distribution network.

While Clementoni products are manufactured at its two Italian plants, the production of components requiring a high labour ratio is outsourced to China. Research & Development on the other hand remains firmly rooted in Italy, in close contact with the market and its developments.

Clementoni began using videoconferencing internally in the Spring of 2003, at a time when diffusion of the SARS virus was causing concerns in the Asiatic regions.

The necessity to continue developing its products without having to send personnel to areas hit by SARS pushed Clementoni into looking at an alternative solution. After selecting videoconferencing systems from the wide range of communications solutions offered by Aethra, Clementoni began conducting many aspects of business by videoconference. The systems turned out to be highly effective business tools for the company, and permitted them to overcome a variety of problems at product processing level, enabling them to avoid the risks linked to travel and the danger of infection.

After having experienced the striking benefits of videoconferencing in terms of time, costs and results, video communication technology was adopted permanently within the company.

The opportunity to connect in videoconference, multiple times a day with colleagues based at the company's offices in Hong Kong is extremely important for Clementoni. It allows staff to examine immediately project drafts and to follow through all the phases of the toy production process, from the original idea, to the development and design. It also enables staff to follow the evolution of the product even down to the smallest detail, thanks to the document camera. In fact, some prototypes need to be painstakingly examined - if they had to be sent between the offices in Italy and Hong Kong on each occasion, the process would be notably lengthened - 3 days would be lost just in delivery times.

Use of the document camera, allows staff to capture on camera each product in extensive detail. Thanks to the video quality they are able to study even the smallest element and to get the exact colour perception of the textiles and other materials used. This makes timely changes possible, and means the company can be more competitive on the market.

"Using the phone as opposed to video communication to receive updates on the various stages of the production process for our products, has revealed itself to be not only more costly but also far less suitable. On the phone one is clearly not able to resolve problems that need a visual analysis of the product", underlines Stefano Clementoni, director of Clementoni for Asia and Hong Kong. "Thanks to the videoconferencing systems, Company Managers can notably reduce there movements, an aspect that consequently has a positive effect on company expenditure, on productivity and on the improved and more timely flow of information between the various offices. For me video communication has become a daily business tool, and as such my business cards carry not only phone number and email address but also my videoconference number," concludes Stefano Clementoni.