Case Study

Truestar Health:
Partnering with VCON to
Build a Premium Internet Health Site

VCON

Introduction

With their motto of "we're helping you change your life one day at a time," Truestar Health™ is the first online health resource to focus on complete health for all age groups. Although their philosophy includes weight loss - the major focus of most other health websites - they go much farther in developing their members' true potential. Truestar Health's innovative and personalized programs also include attitude, nutrition, sleep, vitamins, exercise and sport-specific training.

But Truestar Health's innovations go beyond the content of their programs. Their business model, marketing technique and technology are leading-edge as well. They are breaking new ground with the ways they deliver rich media content through their website. This content includes live and archived video web casts from their fitness and cooking studios. These web casts of gym and aerobics classes, and demonstrations of preparing healthy yet

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CASE STUDY QUICK FACTS

VCON Media Xchange Manager™ (MXM): 10-user MXM license for centralized H.323 device configuration and management, and automated call routing

Codecs: Four VCON HD100 codecs (two in each of two studios)

Videoconferencing/streaming media gateway: STARBAK Create VCG™

Endpoints: Truestar Health members use standard Web browsers

Most Valuable VCON MXM Features:

- The MXM is the network gatekeeper that manages the VCON HD100s and the STARBAK Create VCG™
- The MXM also serves as Truestar Health audio/video content producer's "drag and drop" control console
- The MXM also provides centralized management of the video network, including reporting, upgrade and expansion

Most Valuable VCON HD100 Features:

- Provides premium quality H.263++ videoconferencing transmissions to the VCG
- Integrator-optimized form factor and APIs

Most Valuable STARBAK Create VCG Features:

- Translates H.323-based videoconferencing transmissions from the HD100 codecs into streaming media, broadcasts them over the Internet, and/or archives them for subsequent web casts
- Able to input up to ten live H.323-based videoconferencing transmissions, each at up to 1.5 Mbps
- Enables roughly 1,000 Truestar Health members to simultaneously view live and archived broadband web casts
- Integrates easily by appearing to the MXM as either an H.323 endpoint or gateway

delicious meals, provide Truestar Health members with engaging experiences in which they can physically follow along.

The technology upon which the Truestar Heath web casting service is built is a joint solution from VCON and STARBAK Communications.

Why Truestar Chose VCON

As part of launching their new business, Truestar Health needed to quickly build an unprecedented, premium quality, live and stored video Web casting capability. They not only required best-of-breed technology building blocks, they needed vendors who had already partnered together to integrate their products and prove their synergies.

In choosing VCON and STARBAK, Truestar Health not only got the best high definition codec-the VCON HD100, and the industry leading videoconferencing/ streaming media gateway-the STARBAK VCG, but also the most advanced integrated gatekeeper-the VCON

At the product level, the centralized management functionality of the VCON MXM, and the flexible, intuitive nature of its GUI, made it the ideal drag-and-drop control console for Truestar Health's content producers-providing, control, monitoring, maintenance and upgrade of the videoconferencing codecs.

The HD100/MXM combination provides high-definition H.323 videoconferencing with VCON PacketAssist™ technology for QoS.

Concept to Deployment in Less than One Month

The vendor selection, integration, deployment and service launch for this project went remarkably quickly. According to Anthony Whalen it was less than one month from the time that the vendors were selected to the first program's broadcast over the Internet. Truestar Health attributes this speed to VCON's and STARBAK's responsiveness, and to the joint relationship formed by the two partners around this technology the year before. "We went from specs to deployment. There was no lab

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"Every aspect of this system is revolutionary. Our Web-based technology for delivering TV-quality rich media content engages and delights our members. It is branded by Truestar Health and patented," said Anthony Whalen, Truestar Health's Vice President of Information Systems and co-founder. "We have developed this capability with VCON and STARBAK. It's great having them as our partners."

MXM-to control both. Additionally, by choosing the team of VCON and STARBAK, TrueStar Health built upon a joint relationship that had matured for a year-and-a-half already. Through this relationship, VCON and STARBAK had delivered integrated VCON codec and gatekeeper/STARBAK videoconferencing gateway solutions to carriers and government agencies all over the world.

set up," Whalen recalls. "It helped that all the systems worked just like the specs said they would."

Benefits of VCON Technology

The Truestar Health TV's webcasting capability is built around the integration of VCON and STARBAK technologies resulting in system capabilities not available from other vendors. These technologies include the VCON HD100
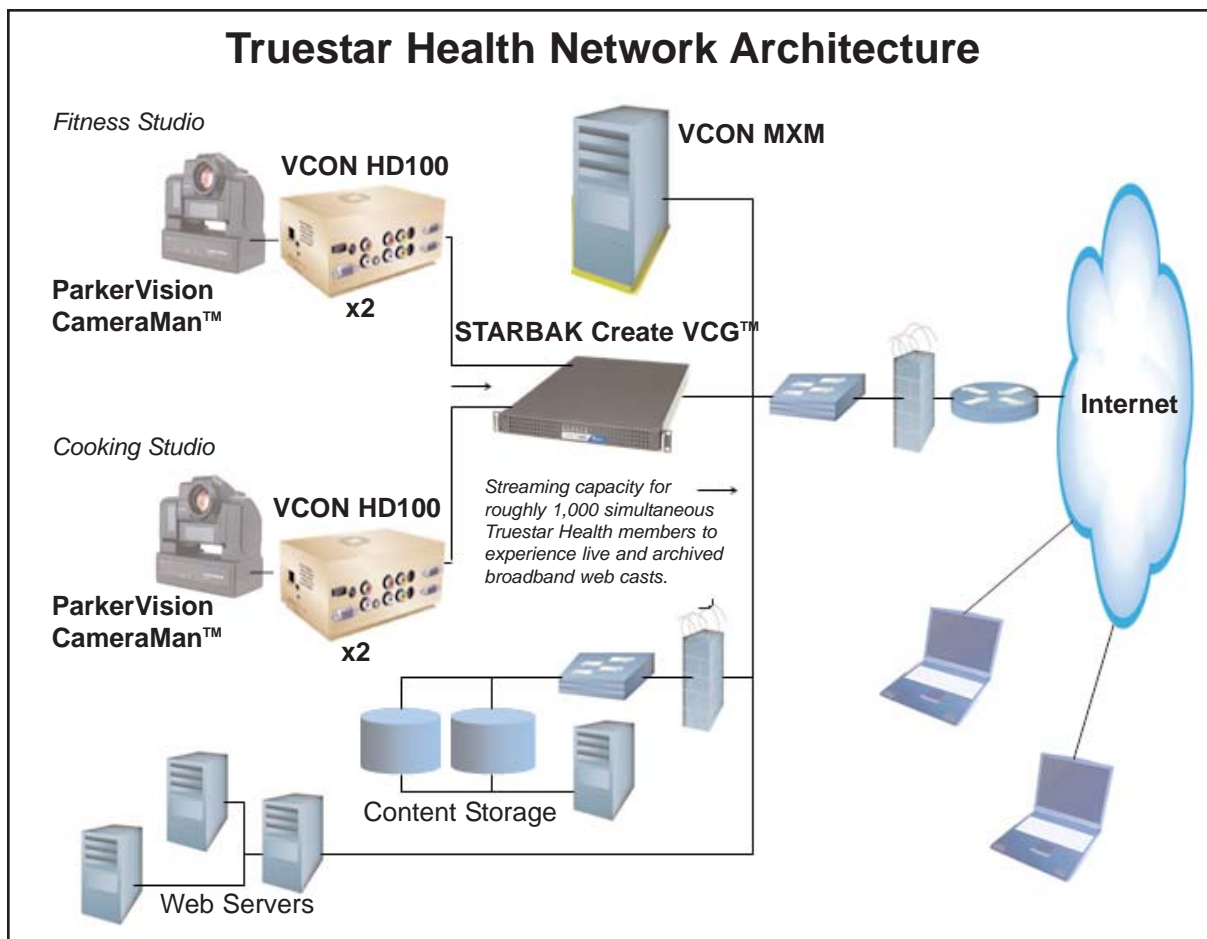
High Definition Codec and MXM (Media Xchange Manager) integrated media server, and the STARBAK Create VCG videoconferencing/streaming media gateway.

The VCON HD100 is the enabler of the high quality achieved by Truestar Health, and a central factor in Truestar selecting VCON as their technology partner. The VCON HD100 is a high-performance integrator-optimized videoconferencing codec based on the new Equator BSP-15 multimedia processor. The HD100 includes VCON's PacketAssist™ architecture for advanced network QoS, and a remote management agent, both of which integrate with VCON's MXM server.

Additional HD100 capabilities include advanced H.263++ support and conferencing at high resolutions including interlaced CIF at 60 fields per second. The HD100 produces high quality video with extremely low latency at IP conferencing data rates up to 2 Mbps. HD100. The HD100 has a compact design making it ready for integration with various external audio mixers, video switches and touch-screen control devices. With a suite of integration APIs, the HD100 can be used to create any custom application in an array of settings such as healthcare, large education facilities and corporate boardrooms.

In addition to integrating with the VCON PacketAssist™ technology to enhance the performance of the HD100s, VCON's MXM provides dial plan administration, remote device configuration, directory services, remote call initiation, video-telephony and Voice/Video IP-PBX functionality, event log and alert agents, and reporting.

Truestar Health Network Architecture

Fitness Studio

VCON HD100

VCON MXM

ParkerVision CameraMan™

x2

STARBAK Create VCG™

Cooking Studio

VCON HD100

ParkerVision CameraMan™

x2

Streaming capacity for roughly 1,000 simultaneous Truestar Health members to experience live and archived broadband web casts.

Internet

Content Storage

Web Servers

The MXM provides the means to efficiently install, configure, monitor, manage, and upgrade all endpoints, regardless of where they are, from a single location. And, the MXM has a full suite of tools for centrally managing and administering the rich media conferencing network in terms of the policies governing the bandwidth and QoS prioritization provided to each endpoint.

Synergies with STARBAK
The integration of the STARBAK VCG with the four VCON HD100s and the MXM provides Truestar Health and their members with two essential benefits. First, the VCG is a videoconferencing/streaming media gateway that takes in H.323 videoconferencing sessions and translates them into the most popular streaming media formats including Windows MediaPlayer™, the Real One™ Player and/or Apple QuickTime™. Therefore, the endpoints used by Truestar Health's members are simple, lightweight and browser-based, using built-in industry standard codecs. Second, the VCG enables Truestar Health to not only stream multiple live web casts, but to also record and archive them and for their members to experience at times other than when they are being transmitted live.

By looking like an H.323 endpoint to the VCON HD100s and MXM, the content producer can simply invite the VCG into a "videoconference" to start the streaming and/or archiving of the session. This, and the APIs of the VCG, enabled Truestar Health to use the intuitive and user-friendly GUI of the MXM to be the drag-and-drop console of the entire web casting system. The Truestar Health network administrator uses the MXM to manage and monitor the VCG in the same way that the MXM manages the HD100 videoconferencing codecs or any other H.323 standards compliant endpoint.

Growth and Future Innovation
Truestar Health is reporting growth of 25% per week. As Truestar Health's needs grow in terms of scale, operational cost savings, new features and additional revenue enhancing services, they know they can continue to rely on VCON to provide them-and their members-with standards-based solutions that deliver premium quality broadcasts from Truestar studios to their member's Web browsers.

And, as Truestar Health continues to innovate with programs that help their members harmonize nutrition, exercise, vitamins and supplements, attitude and sleep, achieving a total health system, they are sure to partner with the best of breed vendors like VCON to help them deliver their programs in engaging, motivating and effective formats.

"A HUGE thank you to the entire Truestar team for bringing such a great concept to life. I've enjoyed being a member for the past nine weeks and look forward to being a member for a very long and happy lifetime! All the best."
--Lita Reyes, Truestar Health member

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