



Mercedes-Benz USA Stays Ahead With Audio-Integrated Virtual Training

Mercedes-Benz hosts operator assisted events to announce marketing initiatives to dealership owners and sales managers across the country

For 50 years, Mercedes-Benz USA (MBUSA) has successfully sustained a leading position as a luxury brand in the automotive industry.

The U.S. company distributes and markets Mercedes-Benz, smart and Sprinter products across the country, requiring prompt and efficient overseas collaboration and nationwide communication with hundreds of local dealerships.

For MBUSA, fast information sharing is crucial in keeping up with the digitization of car buying. To build their information highway, the company uses audio-integrated webinars and operator assisted audio conferencing to keep employees abreast with the most up-to-date details on the company's products, services and campaigns.

Faster Information Sharing Matters More Than Ever

In 2014, the Mercedes-Benz brand was named one of the best global, most valuable brands, valued at more than \$34 billion at the time. To manage their reputation in a digital world, the automotive giant balances an evolving marketing and sales strategy with consistent branding to fulfill their promise to deliver "the best or nothing."

Before a consumer even steps into a dealership, they visit a website, chat online with a representative or post a question to a social media page. With extended contact before, during

and after the car buying experience, employees must know the latest information to better serve the informed consumer and ensure every point of contact is consistent.

How can instant, widespread information sharing happen among a geographically dispersed workforce of over 1,600 employees nationwide and the associated dealerships that employ more than 22,000 additional employees?

Effective Communication Through Virtual Training

With a 25-year tenure at MBUSA, Learning Architect Surya Boonphadung's current role is running the company's intranet and implementing virtual training to employees from MBUSA headquarters in Montvale, N.J. Boonphadung utilizes virtual webinars to effectively communicate with the 362 dealerships across the U.S. and corporate participants from both the U.S. and Mercedes-Benz headquarters in Germany. The company's web events serve a range of audiences and functions, from training participants on monthly engineering services calls to hosting shop foremen and service managers across the country in a single webinar.

To meet his large-scale event needs, Boonphadung hosts periodic operator assisted events to announce new marketing initiatives to the dealership owners and sales managers across the country. With 1,000 invitees and over 500 participants attending live, Boonphadung offers guests a

warm welcome from an experienced operator and receives pre- and post-event reporting on attendee participation.

“The main goal for everything that we do is information sharing. If there’s a new car, if there’s a new policy, if there’s a new feature, we like to get it out there in a timely manner, and this helps us do that.”

— Surya Boonphadung, Learning Architect

PGi’s Integrated Audio Solution

To quickly communicate the company’s inventive new campaigns, Boonphadung uses reservationless GlobalMeet® Audio, fully integrated with web for virtual trainings. GlobalMeet Audio integration makes audio conferencing seamless for both the host and guests. Tasks like calling a number to connect or finding and muting a noisy line are eliminated with automatic dial-in for guests and active talker features.

With PGi’s best-in-class audio, joining webinars is quick and effortless, no matter how attendees go about it. A “connect me” option lets guests join from any device in one click. The system calls attendees and connects them right into the conference.

“The whole process is smooth, and it’s a seamless experience for the user. We know what we’re using, but for the attendees, it’s just another live conference they are dialed into, and it works flawlessly. It’s pretty intuitive.”

— Surya Boonphadung

Seamless Audio Integration

The GlobalMeet Audio integration with the existing web conferencing interface allows the host to use native controls to manage all aspects of the audio conference without any additional training. The host can easily mute, unmute and dismiss attendees. From the attendee perspective, they simply click to join the web link, enter in their phone number and they are automatically connected. If hosts or guests experience glitches or holdups, 24/7 operator assistance and live, in-conference support is available.

Boonphadung said, “Each time I’ve called the help line, service has been prompt and issues have been resolved quickly.”

GlobalMeet Audio integration produces a single, streaming archive with synchronized web and voice recordings. Since the majority of Boonphadung’s audiences watch the recording after the live event, that simplicity yields a high value for his on-demand viewers’ needs.

More User-Friendly Productive Web Events

PGi’s innovative hybrid audio conferencing integration provides MBUSA with:

Polished, Professional Conferencing: The complexity of connecting telephone and VoIP users all over the country from multiple types of devices never shows during webinars. Boonphadung said, “The system works great so we can’t complain about that.”

Enterprise Security: Audio-integrated webinars allow Boonphadung to control access to sensitive information with extra layers of protection. PGi’s secure, industry-leading audio conferencing capabilities include SSL encryption as well as a conference lock option to control access and participation. He also analyzes post-event reports. “I always check the reporting to track how many people accessed the event live and on-demand.”

Cost Savings: “It saves us a whole lot of money,” Boonphadung said. Travel expenses would simply be too extravagant to connect corporate with the hundreds of geographically dispersed employees they need to frequently communicate with.

Scalability: Working with PGi gives MBUSA easy access to other audio conferencing options, like operator assisted conferencing, to support larger audiences over 300 attendees.

Mobility: Along with the ability to join webinars any way they want, audio integration lets users join anywhere, from any device.

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