



Collaborative Justice through Video Communication

Our legal system is overloaded at every turn. From arrests to arraignment, to discovery, to court proceedings, to prisoner transfers and even in the jails themselves, the system has become a complex and precarious connection of many parts. It is a global problem and places an undue burden and impact upon all of society. There is no one solution, but there are certain ways to lighten the load, allowing for the legal process to flow and produce results that protect the public while reducing the expenditures.

The challenges in the system cannot be fixed by one idea or one resolution; instead, a Collaborative Justice Partnership must come together from all branches of the legal and criminal justice system. The problems must be shared and have common goals, and they must not only impact crime, but increase public confidence in the system and, ultimately, reduce costs. With this collaboration, we can balance the conflicting needs of offenders, their families, the victims and the community. But to build the bridges necessary to connect all, we need to join forces and start to face the critical problems head on.

Polycom Spearheads the Justice Conversation with Collaboration

Polycom's Video Communication Solutions for Collaborative Justice offers a unique and promising approach to criminal justice that enables all stakeholders to work together towards a more effective and expeditious resolution of problems. Rather than relying on single agencies to solve their respective problems, Polycom recognizes that many criminal justice problems are systemic and require a coordinated and collaborative response to the most pressing issues facing our justice system today. Collaborative justice partnerships - and the ability to share information, cultivate common goals, and create compatible internal

policies to support those goals - have significant potential to positively impact crime, increase public confidence, and reduce costs throughout the justice system. Justice professionals join forces to analyze problems and create responsive solutions; and stakeholders i.e. judges, court, law enforcement officers etc., reach out to one another to forge partnerships that will enable them to address complex medical, educational, social, fiscal, and behavioral problems that pose significant threats to the safety and well-being of communities.

In the longer term, Collaborative Justice systems with streamlined communication processes benefit from shared ownership of challenges as well as shared methods for solving them - from the moment an offender is brought to court to the reporting process for parolees and juvenile offenders who are placed in the communities after they serve their time.

Arraignment

The arraignment, or first appearance of an offender in the court, relies heavily upon a myriad of agencies to assist this appearance - police, sheriff's deputies, District Attorneys, public defenders, and various court employees. The transportation of the inmate for his or her court date also poses a threat to security and places a huge burden on the taxpayer to ensure public safety. Courthouses do not have the infrastructure to hold and care for inmates as they await their first appearance. Video arraignment allows the court to conduct appearances of inmates without transportation costs or security risks. Additionally, inmates no longer have to endure multiple body searches, use of handcuffs, or the endless waiting period linked to trying to coordinate schedules of the entities that must come together to make an arraignment happen. With video collaboration, the court becomes more efficient and money is saved.

In the Courtroom

Collaborative Justice video solutions are completely shifting the historic notion of a courtroom appearance. Increasingly, cases rely on testimony from experts and interpreters who are not local to a trial. With video participation, travel and time costs become a non-issue. Collaboration also gives much needed security to vulnerable witnesses who must testify. In cases where multiple pieces of evidence need to be presented and shared with the court, advanced content collaboration also enables the process to be accessible to all parties. These video solutions may also be purpose-built and designed specifically for a specific task, creating uses beyond simple video entry points to the courts.

Visitation

Video visitation helps the prison system with two of its major challenges: facilitating safe visitations from the offender population's friends and families, and coordinating reentry programs to assist with the increasing number of offenders' transit from life in jail or prison to life in the community. With Polycom VideoProtect 500, both challenges can be addressed with added benefits such as more easily managed communication, increased safety for prison staff and the visiting population, successful social reintegration thus lowering the risk of reoffending, and the possible reduction of contraband. Polycom's Video visitation system addresses a mix of business solutions. Visitors from near or far have more time to visit with offenders. Regarding reentry, video can play a high stakes roll in assisting offenders reentering society. Prior to release, offenders can meet with a substance abuse counselor, discuss adequate education and job skills, identify limited housing options, and begin treatment for mental health issues – all via a VideoProtect 500.

Reporting

Due to the exponential growth in number of offenders - juvenile and adult - their return to society is becoming a monitoring and reporting crisis. With limited exception, all must either be on parole or on probation. These situations all require long man hours, time and money. Polycom offers a video kiosk solution that provides access to a fully integrated case management team for the community corrections system. The kiosk can be a standalone unit or possibly integrated with API's into an agencies case management system - providing a secure connection for a client to answer the required and necessary questions - job changes, address changes, emergency contacts, or any new case information - and once these questions have been asked and answered, the kiosk via a call center solution can provide a face to face video link for speaking directly to a community corrections officer or community based (CBO) or non-governmental organization (NGO) if the situation calls for it. The use of the video kiosk frees up time for officers to deal with offenders who have more violent tendencies, creating a stronger layer of security for the general public.

“It’s not just the cost of prisoner transport for medical care; there is a public safety issue. The fewer times inmates are moved...the better for both the corrections officers involved and the community at large. For reentry to be successful, sobriety, employment, housing must be addressed together. Government’s cannot do it alone; ownership of “reentry” must be shared with the community.”

Martin F. Horn, Distinguished Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, previously Commissioner NYC Department of Corrections & Probation

About Polycom

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. More than 400,000 companies and institutions worldwide defy distance with video, voice and content solutions from Polycom. Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience and unmatched investment protection.

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