



# St John Ambulance reduces wasteful travel and delivers huge financial savings with Cloud conferencing

A Carillion Case Study:  
St John Ambulance

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

**Project:**  
Video collaboration

**Objective:**  
Video conferencing functionality with Skype for Business  
Automated meeting invites- pre-set microphones and cameras

**Location:**  
Stockport, Durham, London

**Tech spec:**  
Starleaf- Skype for Business based cloud conferencing system  
  
StarLeaf Teamline systems



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## Why did St John Ambulance want to improve its AV communications?

After some major upgrades undertaken by Carillion Communications, we had the opportunity to speak to Simon Wyatt, St John Ambulance IT Director, about the driving forces and objectives that lay behind the initiative.

Simon Wyatt says that a large part of the need lay simply in the fact that St John Ambulance has a high number of staff and volunteers spread over a wide geography. St John Ambulance has 2,500 employees and 20,000 volunteers, and the regions that make up the St John Ambulance operating sectors are also very diverse.

Simon Wyatt is clear about both the human and commercial benefits St John Ambulance was looking to achieve.

- **Improve people’s work-life balance by reducing the impact of travel. Reduce the focus on St John Ambulance’s London HQ by allowing people to stay local.**
- **Save money. Staff travel costs and volunteer reimbursement costs are high.**
- **Reduce travelling time.**

St John Ambulance is the nation’s leading first aid charity. Every year, more than 400,000 people learn how to save a life through St John Ambulance training programmes, including hundreds of thousands of young people.

St John Ambulance volunteers provide first aid in their communities, keeping people safe at events, and working alongside the NHS in response to 999 calls. Event services include medical cover for major sporting fixtures, music festivals and public gatherings. First responder volunteers are trained to attend emergency calls and provide care until the ambulance arrives.

## Extending in-house Microsoft infrastructure through Skype for Business



St John Ambulance had a commitment to the Microsoft platform – Azure servers, Office 365 and Dynamics CRM – that the organisation was keen to leverage.

St John Ambulance had a demonstration of a Skype for Business based cloud conferencing system from Carillion Communications’ partner, StarLeaf, which Simon Wyatt says, *“really opened our eyes. It is devastatingly simple.”*

## Before and after cloud conferencing

Historically, telecoms has taken years to ‘catch on’, which has meant an awful lot of travel. Ad hoc improvements saw people introduce conference phones and, latterly, a range of third party tools, such as GoToMeeting and PowWow Now. Some tech savvy people tried out Skype for Business, but overall communications were fragmented.

Simon Wyatt says that the organisation then experienced *“a perfect telecoms storm. We had an efficiency drive to save money, and a new CEO who is a video conferencing supporter and advocate.”*

## Improved meetings and huge financial savings

Like many organisations with a thin people structure, St John Ambulance staff were serial travellers. Management personnel were perpetually on the move to meetings with colleagues and staff, volunteers and partners. The expense was heavy, especially for a charity.

Today, the CEO gives his regular executive updates on video, and when regional directorates meet they connect via video conferencing. In addition, the new technology has given rise to new operational structures, with renewed purpose and mission. It is far easier to hold longer meetings, compared with long-distance travel or persisting over a scratchy phone line.

St John Ambulance employees and volunteers enjoy a far better quality of meeting experience. Employee forums are full of dialogue and, by removing the emphasis on physically being in London, participants based in Stockport, Durham, London, and elsewhere, hold impressive meetings and save thousands of pounds, both in travel and in paid-for conferencing services.



*“Carillion were very easy to deal with, both managers and engineers in the field and staff based at Carillion’s offices”*

Simon Wyatt,  
St John Ambulance  
IT Director

*“Everything has worked as it should from day one just as planned”*



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## Steady preparation for high quality systems installation

Preparing for change took St John Ambulance time to achieve. With a mix of legacy buildings and infrastructure, it took a while to install data points, screens, flooring and power where needed. After that, according to Simon Wyatt, Carillion quickly took care of the logistics and systems installation.

*“Carillion were very supportive and the installation was very high quality. We couldn’t help but notice that even our wires and peripheral equipment were in better shape than when Carillion arrived.*

*Everything has worked as it should from day one just as planned.”*

## Positive user feedback across a mixed expertise audience

Video conferencing functionality with Skype for Business and StarLeaf Teamline systems is handled automatically. For example, meeting invites, microphones and cameras are pre-set or automated.



Users of the new systems say that they are saving time because everything is simple to set-up, use and maintain. Simon Wyatt reports,

*“Even people who are normally nervous about technology are able to make a one-button start.”*

Today St John Ambulance experiences the highest ever demand on its meeting rooms, which are in constant use. High meeting room use provides a clear sign that St John Ambulance is achieving its goals to be efficient, improve everyone’s work-life balance and control costs.



project services

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- digital signage
- integrated systems ✓
- technical consultancy ✓
- system design ✓
- MS Hub integration

- audio/web conferences
- live events
- conference streaming
- meeting management

- maintenance/engineering
- ‘advantage’ support
- project management ✓

✓ Included in the St John Ambulance project

## The Carillion difference

*Dee Reed, MD, Carillion Communications, said,*

*“It’s great to hear that video conferencing is making people’s lives simpler and more effective, and saving this fabulous charity a lot of money. When we at Carillion see St John Ambulance at a sports event, fete or rally, we feel better knowing that we’ve done something to make their lives easier and more productive.”*



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