



CHALLENGE

Bridge the communication gap between Overseas Filipino Workers and their families

SOLUTION

Deployment of Grandstream's GXV3000 phone in retail malls in countries with large populations of OFWs using a Next IIX INF Vanilla Asterisk network

VALUE CREATED

Hundreds of thousands of OFWs and their families are able to visually connect with one another face-to-face for free

Abot Tanaw Offers Free Video Telephony to Overseas Filipino Workers

Workers Maintain Critical Visual Contact with Family Members Using Grandstream's GXV3000

Philippines

There is an estimated 11 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) working all over the world, mostly to provide and improve the quality of life for the family left in the Philippines.¹ Money sent by OFWs back to the Philippines is a major factor in the country's economy, accounting for roughly 13.5% of GDP. In 2008 alone, the inflow was estimated at \$15.9 billion.² This represents almost half of the Philippine Central Bank's annual Forex reserve. The Philippines is the third largest provider of global labor, next only to China and India.³

Despite the economic contribution that OFWs provide to their families and to the Philippines as a whole, their absence from their loved ones has resulted in a deterioration of familial relations. Many Filipinos workers, who are by nature very close to their families, lack the ability to speak or see their family members for extended periods of time leading to estranged relationships, divorce, and strayed children.

CHALLENGE

Find a simple, low cost way to enable visual communication between OFWs and their families

The widespread corrosion of family units across the Philippines spurred Abot Tanaw senior adviser Efraim Genuino into action. Abot Tanaw is a social media network that allows Global Filipinos to be in touch with their loved ones in the Philippines through highly-advanced voice and video telephony services without any cost to the beneficiaries, and without the need for expensive mobile and Internet subscriptions, and investments in hardware (computers, mobile & pc phones, etc.). Mr. Genuino realized that the Philippine society needed a solution that would counteract this

systemic problem but still continue to bring in enough cash flow to sustain the economy. For the project to be deemed successful, the project had to:

- Provide a simple and affordable way for OFWs to hear and see their loved ones on a regular basis
- Deliver revenue growth and profitability for Abot Tanaw Social Media Network

Though there are many free Internet chat clients that support video calls or videoconferencing like Skype, Gmail video chat and Yahoo! Messenger,

"We wanted to bridge the distance gap between OFWs and their families; making it more accessible and affordable to stay in contact. Hearing voice on the other end of the line is good, but nothing beats seeing your loved ones face while talking. The Internet is too complicated for many of our OFW's and it's too public."

Ephraim Genuino
Sr. Adviser for Abot Tanaw



Abot Tanaw service hub featuring the GXV3000 IP Video Phone

the hardware needed such as computers, webcam, and Internet subscriptions are costly. Many OFWs and their families are not able to afford their own computers, or allowed to have their own computers. Others have their own computers and Internet setup, yet are often too busy to set-up videoconferencing. The cost to access free technology presents a high barrier to overcome for OFWs looking for a cheaper solution to stay in touch with their family members.

Abot Tanaw recognized the need to offset the deterioration of familial contact between OFWs and their loved ones. They turned to NEXTIX to design, implement and maintain the project. Abot Tanaw also selected Grandstream to deploy the GXV3000 IP video phone as the endpoint for their Service Hubs (video kiosks) located in multiple countries. Grandstream's GXV3000 is an advanced IP video phone based on SIP and H.264/H.263 standards and

RESULTS

Simple and Affordable Way for OFWs to Hear and See Family Members

Abot Tanaw realized that the initial rollout would be too costly if they were to install at family homes and OFW homes overseas, so they created "Service Hubs", located in different countries. These service hubs are placed strategically where large concentration of OFWs and Filipino families would find it convenient to go. In the Philippines, for instance, service hubs are installed in major shopping malls since most Filipinos spend free time at these malls with their families and loved ones. Each service hub is set up as one private network that contains around 25 video phones with assigned static IP addresses for each video phone. The GXV3000 video phones

enables high quality, two-way real-time video, high fidelity video quality at bandwidths between 64kbps to 1Mbps and crisp picture quality with an adjustable advanced VGA resolution camera. The GXV3000 allows the user to feel as if they are in front of the other person they are talking to. The video transmission is crisp, clear and un-pixelized unlike many other video phones. The sound and video is perfectly in sync and delivered in real-time.

The Voice-over IP service comes from NextIX INF, an Asterisk-based IP PBX server platform. The NextIX INF overcomes challenges and maximizes the video support beyond what vanilla Asterisk can do. It fixes the issues of codec negotiations on Asterisk and has been customized to offer H.264 video support. This was done by modifying the vanilla Asterisk implementation and adding other open source video solutions to provide seamless integration of H.264 media streaming.

are placed in phone booths with large TV screens for those who would like a larger video screen. A PC is connected to the network for member registration and online scheduling of video calls. The Asterisk-based NextIX INF server handles the media streaming and all video calls coming in and out of a service hub. A Cisco router, assigned with a public IP address, connects the private network to the Internet to interact with other service hubs.

According to Abot Tanaw CEO, Kim Go, "We make it accessible for OFWs and their families to communicate without charging them a fee. Using newly developed technology that involves voice and video telephony services, Abot Tanaw lessens the proverbial toll that separation takes on

Filipino families." Go added, "This is a boon to OFW families that cannot afford mobile and Internet subscriptions and investments in hardware such as computers, mobile and PC phones."

Revenue Growth Opportunity

While video calls are free for OFWs, Abot Tanaw uses advertisements as a key method for revenue growth. When a video phone is idle, it grabs advertisement pictures from a specified IP address, and a picture slideshow acts as a screensaver. Short 20-second video advertisements are also employed and played before a video call. The Next IIX INF server is modified to support on-demand

media streaming. Video advertisements are stored inside the Asterisk server in categories and each category is assigned an extension number. Once a member ID is dialed, Asterisk will look into the member profile and will connect to the extensions containing the video advertisement category that are closest to the member's interests. After the caller dials the member ID of the call recipient, a video advertisement is first streamed on both the caller and call recipient. Video phones from Asterisk, before establishment of the actual video call. After the video is done playing, both parties are then connected using the previous call process to start the video call.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Abot Tanaw/Grandstream solution is currently deployed in 6 malls in the Philippines. The target is 35 malls worldwide.
- Families that often went months, sometimes years, without seeing their loved ones overseas can now see one another daily without paying a dime. The Abot Tanaw/Grandstream solution is closing the gap that divides hundreds of thousands of families.
- Many companies are turning to Abot Tanaw to advertise their products and services. The Grandstream GXV3000 video phone makes helps marketers expand their company's reach.
- The Philippine economy can continue to rely on the remittances that OFWs send over and social malaise has decreased.

LOOKING AHEAD

Abot Tanaw is committed to its ongoing service to the OFW community with fast, affordable communications. To help further fund these video Service Hubs and as they gain more users, Abot Tanaw will continually seek out more creative avenues for sponsors to reach their audience and target their marketing efforts.

As for reaching more OFWs, Abot Tanaw plans to expand their solution targeting to OFW homes. The company will begin by installing 4,000 phones and eventually increase to 15,000 phones. Abot Tanaw also plans to expand this solution globally to other countries hosting OFW communities.

¹ Yvette Collymore (June 2003). "Rapid Population Growth, Crowded Cities Present Challenges in the Philippines". Population Reference Bureau. <http://www.prb.org/Articles/2003RapidPopulationGrowthCrowdedCitiesPresentChallengesinthePhilippines.aspx>. Retrieved 2007-08-14. "An estimated 10 percent of the country's population, or nearly 8 million people, are overseas Filipino workers distributed in 182 countries, according to POPCOM. That is in addition to the estimated 3 million migrants who work illegally abroad"

² Overseas Filipino Workers: <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/spei/tab11.htm>.

³ <http://www.apecdoc.org/post/12/4493>



GXV3000 IP Video Phone



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