

Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)

AMD helps enhance productivity, speeds to market with HP Halo Studio



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Nowhere is the pace of business faster than in the microprocessor industry. A new generation of processors emerges every few months. Technological leadership constantly needs to be proven. A company’s success depends upon its ability to bring innovative products to market fast.

In the highly competitive microprocessor industry, Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) of Sunnyvale, Calif., is one of the perennial leaders. Its products are found in leading business and personal computers, as well as a variety of other electronics.

Its newest processors are consistently just around the corner, being developed face-to-face — often by employees spread all over the world, using the HP Halo Collaboration Studio.

“Face-to-face used to mean you had to physically be in front of each other,” says Chairman and CEO Hector de J. Ruiz. “Now, face-to-face can mean any meeting in the Halo room. The multipoint capability of Halo is phenomenal. As a global company, we need to bring together our software people in Canada, designers in California, our chip capabilities in Austin, and a platform partner in Taiwan. Halo helps us bridge those distances much better than ever before.”

AMD is constantly looking for new solutions to technical and business problems. In problem-solving, creativity and spontaneity are two of the most important assets anyone can bring to the table. “Halo enables both, even for teams spread around the world,” says Linda Starr, Vice President for Worldwide

HP customer case study: Advanced Micro Devices chooses HP Halo Collaboration Studio to link executives, business partners around the world, helping enhance productivity and speed new products to market

Industry: Microprocessor

Objective:

Create a virtual environment to bring together teams of employees, business partners and customers that mimics face-to-face meetings.

Approach:

Advanced Micro Devices built HP Halo Collaboration Studios at three of its major facilities worldwide and, based on its early success, has added two more sites.

Business benefits:

- More creative, spontaneous problem-solving in virtual meetings.
- Fast time-to-market for new products.
- Reduced travel expense.
- Greater availability of executives for daily decision making and crisis management.



Sales and Marketing. “Halo allows true spontaneity and gets people away from the hierarchical type of meeting that can quash creativity. Everyone is essentially on an equal playing field.”

Why Halo?

Like most industry leaders, AMD is a multinational enterprise with offices worldwide. The company is faced with the constant need to bring together technical and marketing teams that may be continents apart.

Nothing compares with a face-to-face meeting, of course. But the cost and delays associated with international travel sometimes make face-to-face meetings impractical. So, as a leading-edge technology company, AMD sought to bring people together through technology. It identified the HP Halo Studio as the best way to do that.

“We evaluated all the options we could find in the marketplace. None of them were in the same ballpark with HP Halo,” Starr says. In an industry built on technological leaps, she says, Halo is the next-generation product that combines both breakthrough technology and incredible ergonomics. “It’s the next best thing to being there.”

Adds Ruiz, “I’ve done interviews with prospective board members via Halo. There’s absolutely no difference between that and doing it face-to-face. It’s suitable not just for traditional business meetings, but for some of the more personal aspects of business.”

Halo studios are currently installed at AMD’s

Sunnyvale headquarters, as well as offices in Austin, Texas and Toronto. Halo proved so successful in those locations that the company is expanding its Halo footprint to include studios at its offices in Dresden, Germany and Beijing, China.

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Halo studios provide participants with life-size, real-time, eye-to-eye communication with one another, combined with outstanding audio and no perceived delay. In short, the technology gives participants the sense of being in the same room.

Participants in a Halo meeting can clearly see one another on one of several high-resolution monitors, and a high-resolution, high magnification video camera enables the team to share physical objects, or computer-generated images, on a 50-inch high-definition collaboration screen overhead.

“The studio environment is unique,” says Starr. “The ability to make people feel closer and more intimate, to more accurately mimic a person-to-person environment, truly enhances communication.”

Solving business problems quickly

So why did AMD choose Halo? “It’s about real-time communication,” Starr says. “It helps you preserve the

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quality of communication and the relationship, without the time delays and expense of flying.”

Halo can help improve efficiency and expedite management decision-making, which can ultimately lead to faster time-to-market for AMD product, she adds. That applies to everyone.

“It’s that way up and down an organization. Our engineers and product managers in California have to be working with their counterparts in Dresden,” she says.

Real-time communication is a critical issue, and the higher you go in an organization the more of an issue it is. “Executives need to be in five or six places in one day. If you have an executive up in the air and you need a decision, a company can be paralyzed. Halo helps us solve that problem.”

AMD executives hold important business meetings over Halo. But more than that, they forge and maintain relationships in a truly global marketplace. Halo, Starr says, gives AMD executives a kind of omnipresent capability.

Ruiz notes that AMD has held several customer meetings using Halo. Sometimes a customer has its own Halo site. Sometimes AMD will invite a customer to its site for a multipoint meeting with AMD facilities in several cities at once. “With Halo, there’s a higher quality of interaction and better coordination internally to give customers just what they need.”

Better meetings help build demand

Starr says people have shorter but more productive

meetings through Halo. “With other technologies, so much time can be spent reviewing canned content. Often it’s outdated. But with Halo, you can move beyond that. You can incorporate information you’ve just learned about that day and hold a truly interactive meeting, regardless of how far apart you may be.”

“There came a point in time when Halo became a part of our internal vernacular. Now it’s part of our toolkit. People ask, ‘Do we have to do this in person, or can we do it in Halo?’”

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In the company’s Sunnyvale location, the Halo studio is busy most of the day. Average meetings run 30 minutes to an hour — a sure sign that a lot gets done in a short period of time. And not just internal team meetings. AMD employees also use the Halo studio to interview job candidates, meet with business partners, and more.

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“We quickly went from people not knowing if they wanted to use Halo, to having regions wanting to be at the top of the list for a new studio,” she says. “We’re a global business, and we would like to have the benefits of Halo in all of our top locations.”

Solution at a glance

Primary application

Distance collaboration

Primary hardware/software

HP Halo Collaboration Studio

Of course the company saves money on travel, she acknowledges. But the benefits go much further. With Halo, employees can solve problems faster, and that helps create both savings and competitive advantage.

She says that another company using Halo pointed out to her that anyone who spends less time traveling, and is therefore happier at home, becomes more productive all the time. Jeffrey Katzenberg of DreamWorks Animation, another Halo user, suggested it paid for itself in a few months. Starr reports that she uses Halo every week, avoiding a substantial amount of travel. Other AMD executives do, too.

“We even held CEO meetings — executive sessions between Hector and his team, with HP CEO Mark Hurd and his team. A few years ago, you would never have heard of a meeting like that being done with a virtual tool. Now it’s just assumed.”



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