



# Satellite Executive BRIEFING

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**Industry Trends, News Analysis, Market Intelligence and Opportunities**

## Satellite: The Secret to Successful Broadcast Events

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by Dan Freyer

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**E**mployee training. Product launches. “Town Hall” meetings. Customer appreciation events. Shareholder events. Marketing lead-generation events. Conferences. More than ever, to compete businesses need to inform, engage and motivate employees, stakeholders, and constituents around the country or the world. But how do you efficiently gather together large numbers of people in many locations at the same time while minimizing travel, other expenses, and wasted time? How do you meet “virtually” with staff, colleagues, suppliers or customers in real-time even if you can’t be there physically?

### Corporate Video Events – Benefits of Using a Satellite-based Service

Businesses, among them the likes of Nokia, HP, Microsoft, Apple, and others are turning to satellite experts to help them rev up their events. Satellites offer nationwide and global reach, letting you share your message cost-effectively with virtually any authorized and equipped site, and there are thousands of satellite-capable venues available around the world. Thanks to huge improvements in recent years in the cost-efficiency of satellite and video technology, satellite links are more affordable than ever before.

### Town Hall Meetings: A Typical Satellite Success Story

Marsh & McLennan (MMC) ([www.mmc.com](http://www.mmc.com)), a global professional services firm, insurance broker, and risk advisor,

has around 54,000 employees in 100 countries, and annual revenues of US \$11 billion. International financial market dynamics have a huge impact on its business, and timely communications is critical.

When MMC’s new CEO wanted a “Town Hall” meeting to discuss the company’s new strategies with employees on four continents, it first tried a video webcast. It brought hundreds of employees to seven offsite locations from cities around the world, while thousands more watched live from conference rooms and ballrooms via a secure Internet hookup.

Although the event was a success, MMC’s Director of Internal Communications Vincent Beatty wanted an even better solution in the future. “At the end of the day our experience was that web-based video suffered a lot of glitches,” says Beatty. MMC decided to move to satellite for its next event.

Broadcasting from London to seven locations across Europe, Asia and the Pacific, the event brought together an estimated 5,000 participants. “We brought people into conference facilities around the world and had call-ins from other cities. “The technical challenges were enormous, and we needed the utmost confidence in a vendor. We needed a home run,” explains MMC’s Beatty. After a rigorous RFQ process, MMC turned to Alden HD of Bristol, CT to produce its program, with Keystone Enterprise Services of Salt Lake City, UT ([www.keystonebtv.com](http://www.keystonebtv.com)) as their satellite technical partner for the job.

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### Satellite: Key to Successful Broadcast Events...from page 1

“The results were spectacular,” says Beatty. “98% of polled participants ranked the satellite-delivered event as good to excellent, an improvement over webcast figures. We also gauge success by replay numbers, served from Australia, NY and London based on connectivity. The satellite event had over 19,000 replay views,” he says.

Advantages over webcasting that satellite offers include:

- **High-resolution video:** Satellite delivers video suitable for display on large monitors and large projectors, at up to full High Definition (HD) quality. Streaming video over the web, “webcasting,” is possible where a broadband Internet connection is available, but still can result in jerky and intermittent video and audio, and is delivered at too low a resolution for projection. Internet connectivity capable of supporting real-time video via webcasting is not available from many venues. Hotel LANs connecting conference rooms may share bandwidth with reservation systems. With satellite distribution, TV media can easily capture and use your high-quality signal for on-air broadcasting – great publicity for product launches.
- **Wide Geographic Coverage:** Satellite’s nationwide coverage blankets even the most remote, rural, and ‘un-wired’ locales. Whether your event is hosted at an exotic

tropical resort or remote ski lodge, satellite connectivity provides ample bandwidth, where landlines may not. Secure broadcasting also can protect content and restrict its delivery to only authorized corporate sites and equipment.

- **More Sites – Not More Cost:** Satellite’s broadcast nature means



(Photo courtesy of Keystone Enterprise Services)

that, unlike landline-based solutions, there is no additional bandwidth cost to add more receive sites, whether hundreds or thousands more. For product launches and events hoping to get broadcast media coverage, satellites provide an ideal way for TV stations to also tune in to the event.

- **Fast deployment at venues (vs. telco circuits):** Set-up time can be just days, whether it’s installing an HD capable receive system at a venue,

or setting up a portable uplink at a signal origination site.

#### Taking Advantage of Satellite

With all these pros, how do you take advantage of satellite technology to make your next event a success? Experience has shown that successful events depend on working with a provider that has a successful track record supporting live program production, transmission for special events.

Companies like Keystone Enterprise Services can manage end-to-end satellite production and broadcast of corporate special events, as well as on-site TV production services, from creative to technical crew. Services typically include satellite transmission and scheduling, video signal encryption for security, arranging transportable and ad-hoc satellite uplinks to broadcast from remotely located venues, and for downlinks at receive venues.

#### What to Look For in a Provider

The larger and the more complex your event will be, the more you may want to find a seasoned shop for the job. Only a few top players can handle global and large international events and have the ability to deploy specialists worldwide to install and support their production and transmission solutions. “The technical expertise of the provider is essential,” explains MMC’s Beatty. Look for companies with dedicated and highly trained technical and support staff that can help you with every aspect of events and live transmissions including production, engineering, transmission control and monitoring.

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Your satellite vendor should have specialized experienced in corporate events. “There is a ton of coordination involved. You never want to have someone cut their teeth on a job for your business,” explains Beatty, adding “Keystone allayed our fears from the start, having done this many times.”

“Over the past 28 years, Keystone has helped thousands of companies pull off successful satellite events, and we handle hundreds of events and thousands of hours of transmission per year, offering total event management and production services,” says Dan Loveless, Sr. Vice President of Keystone Enterprise Services.

### **One-Stop Shopping**

As an event planner, chances are you have more than enough on your plate to plan the event and your program. That is where a ‘one-stop-shop’ satellite ‘satellite partner’ can help by serving as a single point of contact for technical management of the broadcast.

Ask for a single invoice and see if your provider can coordinate the many ancillary services you may need. A full-service provider can also help clients achieve the ‘on-air’ look they envision, and may offer related services such as set design, rendering diagrams, signage, lighting schematics for the set and audience, power point production, event entertainment, event management services, strategic meeting management, web surveys, and travel reservations and services.

Other value-added services include venue site selection and catering services, a help desk, logistical planning, post-event reporting, audio bridges and video conferencing. International events may require multiple satellites and

language translation services, in addition to coordinating production across time zones.

### **Venue Selection and Field Support Experience**

Depending on the type of event and the type of audience you are trying to reach, potential event venues may include hotels, convention facilities, universities and colleges, auditoriums, theaters, stadium and arenas, private dining rooms for smaller groups at restaurants, as well as ‘public’ and private videoconferencing rooms. Top vendors know what to look for and how to get things done. For example, Keystone Enterprise Services offers access to 15,000 commercial satellite video locations worldwide. “We have field experience working at thousands of venues in the Keystone Events network, so we can help you find and select venues, and then provide satellite link-ups, letting you take your broadcast event into these venues,” says Keystone Enterprise Services’ Dan Loveless.

### **Engage and Interact with Participants. Measure Audience Response**


The value of direct viewer interaction with a broadcast is huge. Audience-response solutions can help engage participants and measure participation. These can include live audience polling, on-screen audience poll results and

graphics integration, audio conferencing, and chat/email viewer-interaction management. Experienced vendors will be able to advise you on how to take advantage of these applications and can employ them for your event.

### **Post-Event Support**

For viewers unable to attend live from a satellite location, webcasting may be a better option than no video. Offering the post-event video for download on demand is another way to reach your audience. Ask your vendor if they can offer a simultaneous webcast, and recorded on-demand download of the video. Remember to take ‘exit polls,’ for example by email surveys, after each event and even during sessions to assess the opinions of participants on the value of the event.

### **The Bottom Line**

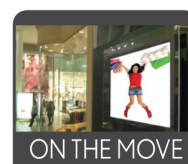
Satellite broadcast technology offers a powerful way to help make your large-scale video event a success. With an experienced satellite events partner on ‘your team,’ you will be ideally positioned to ensure your audience will enjoy the best quality video and audio. That, combined with options for total event support by the leading satellite service providers, lets you focus on achieving your goal: powerful communications. 



**Dan Freyer** has 20 years of experience in satellite communications. He wrote the chapter on “Satellite Services” in the industry reference book, *The Satellite Technology Guide for the 21st Century* (Synthesis Publications, 2008). Dan has written extensively on satellite communications for several industry trade magazines. He can be reached at: [inquire@adwavez.com](mailto:inquire@adwavez.com)



**Your Message. Anywhere.**  
**We Get it There.**



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