

Deaf Services Unlimited

Enhancing Service Delivery With Video Web Conferencing



Diana Kautzky was born to deaf parents. As a result, she learned to speak in American Sign Language as her first language. More importantly though, because she could hear, she became the medium through which her parents communicated with the world around them. Things like going to the doctor. Applying for a job. Or asking for assistance at the hardware store.

So it was inevitable that she would create a business, Deaf Services Unlimited, to reduce communication barriers for people who are deaf. The company offers sign language interpreting services, captioning services and is a resource on a wide variety of issues regarding hearing loss and communication access.

■ Client Challenge

But sign language interpretation poses a double communication problem. First, there's the actual interpretation. Second, you must locate a qualified interpreter at the right time and place. People who are deaf may need an interpreter at any time, any place. How could Deaf Services Unlimited meet the challenge?

"American sign language conveys rich information," Kautzky said. "You use your eye gaze, you shrug your shoulders all as you convey the message but these visual cues are a part of the syntax. Without an interpreter, you really can't have a two-way conversation."

A service that relies on visual nuance as well as auditory cues must be built on a highly reliable solution platform.

■ INS Solution

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is Deaf Services Unlimited's real-time web solution that utilizes video conferencing services from INS. Through VRI, a company or organization who needs to provide for equal access schedules a sign language interpreter who interprets via webcam. At the point of service, a person who is deaf sees the sign language interpretation on a computer screen while the person who is hearing can listen. As the hearing and deaf parties have a conversation, all parts of the conversation are being interpreted by the interpreter on the computer screen.

Web-based video, using business class quality Video Web Conferencing Services from INS, has transformed how Deaf Services Unlimited serves its clients.

"What we get from INS is an extremely high level of quality," she said. It's high definition quality. From our end, it's exceptional. It all goes back to making sure that you have the high level of clarity and fluidity on that bandwidth."

"If you're talking about transferring money out of a bank account, the numbers are in a particular sequence," said Kautzky. "Every gesture is critical. It can't be choppy, you can't have dropped packets."

INS Video Web Conferencing goes way beyond off-the-shelf solutions like Skype. While you can access the service with readily available hardware, INS can provide quality connections without as much bandwidth as other legacy solutions.

INS manages its self-healing IP network where these services are hosted. Got a problem? Local support technicians are available 24/7 to troubleshoot.

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■ Why INS?

Kautzky and her team talked with several other technology providers before deciding to partner with INS. “The other companies just seemed to try to plug us into their existing solution,” said Kautzky. “INS was willing to explore possibilities with us and configure a solution to meet our technical needs. They provide 24/7 technical support; that was appealing. They have worked relentlessly to solve technical problems. And we love that they’re an Iowa-based company.”

■ Results and Benefits

“When you’re in a rural area, a qualified sign language interpreter is hard to find,” she said. “With VRI, now we can instantly provide a qualified interpreter anywhere there’s Internet access.”

That also means she can work with a nationwide pool of certified interpreters. If there’s a medical or police emergency, suddenly it’s not hard to find an interpreter at 3 a.m. on a Saturday.

Deaf Services Unlimited has truly become...unlimited. The company is no longer confined by the location of interpreters or clients. If there’s an Internet connection, Kautzky and her team can fill the communication need.

Deaf Services Unlimited’s tagline is “Go Ahead. Expect too much.” Kautzky is careful to align her company with partners who can deliver to the Deaf Services Unlimited standard.

“Having video allows us to take this level of service to more people, and will help our company grow. INS was willing to partner in our promise to our customers. INS is on our team.

“We never go wrong when we align ourselves with people who are as committed to the customer experience as we are. When we do that, we can’t fail.”

“Video Remote Interpreting is an integral part of our client service plan. We expect our business to grow between 20-25% within the next year as a result of VRI positioning us to serve more organizations and their clients nationwide, without location and time constraints.”

*Diana Kautzky,
Deaf Services Unlimited*