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- Deliverable Name: European Videoconferencing Endpoints Markets
- Region in which Award is given: Europe
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- Manager: Dominic Dodd
- Analyst: Prarthana Somal



Award Recipient

The recipient of the 2008 Frost & Sullivan Product Innovation Award for the European Videoconferencing Endpoints Market is Sony Professional Solutions Europe.

Sony PSE has been selected for this award based on its commitment to technological innovation and new product development confirmed with the launch of the industry's first 1080i videoconferencing solution.

Award Description

The Frost & Sullivan Award for Product Innovation is presented each year to the company that has demonstrated excellence in new products and technologies within its industry. The recipient company has shown innovation by launching a broad line of emerging products and technologies.

Research Methodology

To choose a recipient of this Award, the analyst team tracks all launches of new products, R&D spending, products in development, and new product features and modifications. This is accomplished through interviews with the market participants and extensive secondary and technology research. All new product launches and new products in development in each company are compared and evaluated based on degree of innovation and customer satisfaction. Companies are then ranked by number of new product launches and new products in development.

Measurement Criteria

In addition to the methodology described above, there are specific criteria used to determine final competitor rankings in this industry. The recipient of this Award has excelled based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Significance of new product(s) in its industry
- Competitive advantage of new product(s) in its industry
- Product innovation in terms of unique or revolutionary technology
- Product acceptance in the marketplace
- New product value-added services provided to customers
- Number of competitors with similar product(s)

2008 European Frost & Sullivan Award for Product Innovation

Award Recipient – Sony

The European videoconferencing endpoints market is now showing steady growth after being virtually stagnant for a number of years. The market is not only growing but also broadening, with vendors working both on developing exciting new and innovative products, and targeting new vertical markets.

Over the past few years, there has been a trend of greater sales of high-definition (HD) videoconferencing endpoints, which deliver both better quality sound and greatly improved picture resolution. Also, high-end visual communications solutions - like Telepresence - are creating an additional 'buzz' in the marketplace, and have helped grow awareness of the capabilities of this next generation of visual communications technologies, in turn promoting demand and sale of high-end, high definition VC systems.

Sony is in the vanguard of product innovation with the PCS-XG80 system, which is the industry's first 1080i HD videoconferencing system.

With the HD video over IP networks representing a lucrative growth opportunity in communications technology, Sony's launch of the PCS-XG80 further strengthens and extends its HD videoconferencing endpoints product line and positions it to take advantage of the growing demand for advanced HD videoconferencing by users.

Technical strengths and features

The PCS-XG80 system combines 1080i resolution and a high frame rate of 60 fields per second to deliver a superb, natural motion video quality which can act as a very realistic alternative to face-to-face meetings.

The system with 1080i represents 1,080 lines of vertical screen resolution, which are scanned alternatively, or interlaced. The PCS-XG80 deploys fully extensive feature set of PCS-HG90 videoconferencing product, including enhanced intelligent Quality of Service (QoS), and memory stick media support - among others.

Additionally, PCS-XG80 supports the following features:

- The Sony proprietary Bright Face technology, which promises clearer images under even poor-lightening conditions,
- The PCS-XG80 does not require any firewall transversal and has two ports – LAN & WAN to easily bridge between corporate network and public internet facility.
- The PCS-XG80 also complies with the ITU-T H.239 standard, ensuring presentation data can be shared with other locations at a frame rate as high as 30fps, which makes it possible to present animations during a videoconference.

- Additionally, users are able to use the 'Video Annotation' function with which the user can draw attention to specific part of its image by writing on a tablet device.

It also offers greater flexibility by giving users the option of connecting with HD videoconferencing endpoints over the growing number of high bandwidth IP connections, or with the massive existing installed user base of standard definition systems using either the standard Internet or ISDN networks.



Market acceptance and innovation

Sony's new PCS-XG80 product offers some unique capabilities for a videoconferencing endpoint, and is broadening the market in terms of geographical coverage and end-users groups.

The PCS-XG80 with its superior video quality and higher picture resolution can be increasingly used for sectors like healthcare in applications like remote patient diagnosis & operations and by government sector for surveillance and emergency services.

The PCS-XG80 also supports six-site multipoint conferencing and Continuous Presence Mode with Voice Activated switching. The user has a facility to call up to five other remote sites to simultaneously meet. Its multi-language capabilities supports for 20 different languages, including Russian. The enhanced language capabilities of PCS-XG80 are anticipated to help accelerate its adoption in the European market

New product value-added services provided to customers

The higher definition video and audio capabilities of PCS-XG80 allows the participants to hold longer calls with experiencing fatigue which is normally associated with poor quality calls. This can be attributed to the fact that the human eye and ear need to work less hard in deciphering the information they receive from the remote end, particularly when the distant speaker is not talking in his or her first language.

The higher bandwidth used by both the video and audio signals also helps reduce the amount of vital information lost.

Innovation leader position

The launch of the PCS-XG80 is ensuring Sony remains a leading player in technology innovation in the visual communications space. It not only appears to be the videoconferencing endpoint of the year but is also a crucial development for HD videoconferencing market.