



Service Provider

Daily Use

- C-level communications
- Command and control
- Emergency management
- Crisis communications

Solution

- Polycom® KIRK® Wireless Server 300
- Polycom KIRK 5020 handsets

Results and Benefits

- Cost-effective solution for wireless in-flight voice communications
- Ability to support four lines with one base station reduces installation costs
- Polycom noise cancellation technology ensures clear calls
- Intuitive, stylish interface eliminates learning curve for users

EMS Sky Connect Keeps Customers Flying with Polycom® Wireless Voice Solutions

Busy executives need to stay productive, even when their office is 30,000 feet in the air and flying at 450 miles an hour across oceans, deserts, or polar ice caps.

That's why corporate and private jet owners turn to EMS Sky Connect. The Takoma Park, Maryland-based company provides satellite-based tracking and voice systems for commercial and government customers. Sky Connect's solutions tap into the Iridium global satellite communications network—the only network offering coverage of the entire Earth. That means Sky Connect customers are never out of reach.

Sky Connect's Forté in-flight phone system brings that convenience to passengers in cabin-class aircraft. Designed for communications ranging from voice conversations to checking e-mail, the Forté system includes the Polycom® KIRK® Wireless System 300 and Polycom KIRK 5020 handsets. The KIRK solution uses the digital enhanced cordless telecommunications (DECT) standard.

Sleek and lightweight, the Polycom KIRK 5020 handset proved ideal for Sky Connect's wireless Forté product line. "There is an undeniable market need for an affordable and feature-rich flight phone," says Iain Ronis, director of communications for EMS Sky Connect, a division of EMS Technologies. "With the Polycom KIRK 5020 handset at its heart, the Forté system meets that need. The system lets passengers move around the cabin while still using the phone, and that adds an important level of convenience."

Ronis says owners of cabin-class aircraft are accustomed to seeing that their needs are met. Aircraft such as the Gulfstream® G-IV jet can cost millions of dollars to outfit with custom interiors. And for those customers, not any phone will do. "In this market, aesthetics are paramount," he says. "It has to work well and look great. A clumsy product won't succeed."

So when the manufacturer of its previous on-board handset ended production of the unit, Sky Connect had to source a new handset for the Forté line. "Handset development is just too expensive to take on internally,

"Even in a cabin-class aircraft that is quiet by most people's standards, you have ambient noise. The more you can reduce that, the happier users are. And here, Polycom really delivers."

Iain Ronis, Director of Communications, EMS Sky Connect



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and yet most commercially available handsets don't have the quality, aesthetics or ease-of-use that our market requires," says Ronis. "Then we tested the Polycom KIRK handset, and that was it."

Gaining Flexibility at 30,000 Feet

Sky Connect uses the KIRK Wireless Server 300 for its wireless voice communications. "The flexibility of the KIRK Wireless Server 300 base station turned out to be a very nice plus. We can install just one base station and support up to four lines, and that reduces installation costs. We didn't find anything else as flexible."

Though Sky Connect takes the Polycom KIRK solution to the skies, the KIRK Wireless Server 300 is designed to enable small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) to cost-effectively deploy wireless communication in their offices. The Polycom KIRK 5020 handset offers 24 hours of talk time and 200 hours of stand-by time, and enables workers in SMBs to move about their office while always remaining in touch with customers and colleagues.

"We tell our customers they can use the phones up to 500 feet from the base unit." But Ronis adds wryly, "We don't recommend trying that during a flight."

The Kirk solution offers hands-free speakerphone, caller ID, call timer, a 40-name phone book, as well as a headset jack and a choice of 13 menu languages. And a single KIRK Wireless Server 300 base station supports up to four lines.

Ensuring Satisfaction with Polycom

To build the Polycom handset into the Forté line, Sky Connect needed only to design a customized, fire-resistant charging cradle. "We were glad to find an off-the-shelf wireless handset that meets the needs of a phone system onboard an aircraft," says Ronis.

A key advantage of the KIRK 5020 handset is Polycom's noise cancellation technology. "We needed a phone that will suppress the surrounding noise," says Ronis. "The sound footprint of an aircraft represents a lot of challenges. Even in

a cabin-class aircraft that is quiet by most people's standards, you have ambient noise. The more you can reduce that, the happier users are. And here, Polycom really delivers."

Polycom's audio clarity is essential not just for those onboard. "Historically, when you get complaints about noise over a phone connection, they tend to focus on what the person on the ground hears," explains Ronis. "We've never had any complaints about audio quality of the Polycom handsets. These have been among the most reliable phones we've ever sold."

With a color display screen and user-friendly keyboard, the Polycom handset also enables users to make calls without first climbing a steep learning curve. That's important, says Ronis, because the passenger list in some jets changes constantly. "They don't want a phone system that works differently from what passengers are used to. With the Polycom handsets, information is presented clearly. It's every straightforward, and it has the sleek, even sexy look that this market demands."

Eyeing Growth Among Airlines

Sky Connect distributes its Forté system through companies that specialize in furnishing aircraft interiors. The company also has placed units on passenger jet aircraft, with the Forté system allowing crew members to communicate with corporate offices and other destinations without tying up cockpit communication channels.

Having recently secured Federal Aviation Administration certification for the Forté system in Gulfstream G-IV class aircraft, Ronis says the company is in talks with airlines to outfit first-class cabins with the wireless systems.

Until then, they'll continue to rely on Polycom wireless voice solutions to provide corporate aircraft customers with the ability to stay connected anywhere in the world—and even when they're five miles above it.

Learn More

To find out how Polycom solutions can help your organization, visit us at www.polycom.com or speak with a Polycom Account Representative.

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