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Zurich boosts global collaboration with Telepresence

Zurich Financial Services (Zurich) has successfully implemented Telepresence solutions to facilitate and to promote global meetings through advanced video conferencing, while significantly reducing travel costs. The technology enables Zurich to improve productivity, accelerate decision-making and deliver competitive advantages.

Using the latest high definition telepresence technology, Orange Business Services has provided seven rooms equipped with large screens and a seating capacity of up to 18 people each. The rooms are situated in Los Angeles, Schaumburg, New York, Mercer Island and Agoura Hills in the U.S.; London, U.K.; and Zurich, Switzerland. The four large HDTV screens give the impression of near real-life, face-to-face meetings with people sitting thousands of miles apart. All rooms are of exactly identical design, perfectly matching interiors, colors and lighting, which creates the visual impression of all participants being in the same room.

Orange Business Services has managed the project from design, implementation, commissioning, to operate it as a service with an easy-to-book reservation desk for Zurich.

Since the initial deployment was completed, hundreds of people across Zurich's global businesses have participated in Telepresence meetings, eliminating numerous medium and long haul flights. This has not only reduced travel costs but has also positive effects from an eco-friendly perspective.

"Telepresence enables remote collaboration with a level of immediacy and fluidity that other solutions lack," said Michael Paravicini, Zurich's Chief Information Officer. "It has improved the working experience for Zurich people, it provides wide access to expertise across the business, and it has saved costs and time whilst increasing productivity."

"Telepresence has succeeded to offer a natural and cost-effective collaboration experience – as simple as walk in and start talking," said Helmut Reisinger, Senior Vice President Europe at Orange Business Services. "The quality of service and ease of use has met expectations of Zurich. Telepresence technology, combined with the Orange IP network's global reach and services portfolio, means that we can provide a high quality solution almost anywhere in the world."

"The Management of Zurich is convinced about the benefits of Telepresence," continues Michael Paravicini. "The high quality of the technology gives people insight into all the nuances and signals in the interactions they have with colleagues. This makes the experience much richer for everyone involved and more effective for the business."





About Zurich Financial Services

Zurich Financial Services Group (Zurich) is an insurance-based financial services provider with a global network of subsidiaries and offices in North America and Europe as well as in Asia Pacific, Latin America and other markets. Founded in 1872, the Group is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. It employs approximately 60,000 people serving customers in more than 170 countries.

About Orange

Orange is the key brand of France Telecom, one of the world's leading telecommunications operators. With 123 million customers, the Orange brand now covers Internet, television and mobile services in the majority of countries where the Group operates. At the end of 2008, France Telecom had consolidated sales of 53.5 billion euros (12.7 billion euros for the first quarter of 2009) and at April 29, 2009, the Group had a customer base of almost 184 million customers in 30 countries. These include 123 million mobile customers worldwide and 13 million broadband Internet (ADSL) customers in Europe. Orange is the number three mobile operator and the number one provider of broadband Internet services in Europe and, under the brand Orange Business Services, is one of the world leaders in providing telecommunication services to multinational companies.

The Group's strategy, which is characterized by a strong focus on innovation, convergence and effective cost management, aims to establish Orange as an integrated operator and benchmark for new telecommunications services in Europe. Today the Group remains focused on its core activities as a network operator, while working to develop its position in new growth activities. To meet customer expectations, the Group strives to provide products and services that are simple and user-friendly, while maintaining a sustainable and responsible business model that can be adapted to the requirements of a fast-paced and changing eco-system.

France Telecom (NYSE:FTE) is listed on Euronext Paris (compartment A) and on the New York Stock Exchange.

For more information: www.orange.com, www.francetelecom.com, www.orange-business.com

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