



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

---

# The Johnson School of Management at Cornell University Relies on Polycom Video for International Expansion

### Industry

Higher education

### Daily use

- Distance learning
- Guest lecturers

### Solution

- Polycom room video conferencing systems
- Polycom multipoint conference bridges

### Results and benefits

- National exposure for Cornell, resulting in increased financial support from alumni

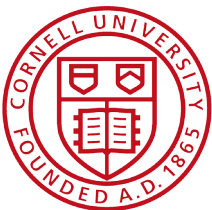
Located in Ithaca, NY, Cornell University is the United States' largest and most comprehensive Ivy League university. The Johnson School of Management at Cornell is consistently ranked among the nation's top business schools. Competition for admission to the school is considerable since many applicants are interested in earning a degree highly valued by potential employers worldwide.

In 1999, The Johnson School began offering a classroom-based Executive MBA program outside of New York City, with classes every other weekend. This Executive MBA consistently ranks among the region's highest-rated programs, but school administrators were intent on reaching a larger pool of students by launching a program nationally. However, the school didn't want to disrupt the lives of faculty members through relocation or inhibit research opportunities by removing them from the university setting.

That's why a request from Queen's University in Ontario, Canada, to partner in an Executive MBA program offered via video conferencing appeared to be the perfect solution. In 2004, The Johnson School joined with Queen's School of Business to launch the Cornell-Queen's Executive MBA program. "The school wanted to make a footprint nationwide with its program and from both a human resources and cost perspective, video-enabled distance learning made the most sense," explains Stephen Demmings, Video Conferencing Manager with the Cornell-Queen's Executive MBA program. The program allows students to pursue their degrees without quitting their jobs and faculty to teach from the Ithaca campus.

### The right partner

Queen's School of Business, consistently ranked the top business school outside the U.S., has been offering its National Executive MBA program in Canada via video since 1994 and was looking to expand with a partner university in the United States. The resulting partnership is the Cornell-Queen's Executive MBA, a 17-month program with sixty percent of the classes taught over video. Students visit the Cornell and Queen's campuses only three times over the course of 17 months, but they participate in a program with the same core curriculum and faculty as the traditional in-residence Executive MBA program. At the end of the program, they graduate with MBA degrees from both Cornell University and Queen's University.



“Video conferencing is at the core of our Learning Model. The program is designed around this technology.”

Stephen Demmings, Video Conferencing Manager of Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA

The program’s 42 Saturday classes are taught over video by both Cornell professors located in a video-equipped studio on the Ithaca campus and Queen’s professors in a similar studio located in Kingston, Ontario. Students meet in video-enabled Boardroom Learning locations primarily Centers in Regus business centers around the country. Student “learning teams” of five to nine people connect in real time, using video, to the studios and the other boardroom locations.

Advanced distance-education peripherals are fully interoperable with Polycom video conferencing systems, making distance learning classes highly interactive and engaging. Polycom® People+Content™ collaboration technology allows instructors to be displayed on one screen and content on a second screen for a more natural classroom experience. SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard technology enables the highlighting of specific content on slides, and One Touch technology allows students to be polled on-demand. The One Touch system also lets students electronically “raise their hands.” By simply hitting a button, the student’s name appears on a screen in the studio and the instructor can take the question at the most appropriate time. In addition, the program incorporates content sharing among students and real-time chat.

### A successful program

The Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA is currently offered to students in New York, Ohio, Washington state, Oregon, Georgia, Texas, New Hampshire, and Washington, D.C. “The number of students enrolled has increased each year since the beginning of the program,” says Demmings. “In the U.S. alone, enrollment has more than tripled from year one to the present day. Students like the fact that they can earn an Ivy League education but still keep living and working on the west coast, or wherever they reside,” reports Demmings. “And after the first couple of weeks, the students say that the [novelty of the] technology simply fades away.”

Unlike regionally-focused Executive MBA programs, the very nature of the video-enabled Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA gives it a much broader focus. For example, students in Atlanta enrolled in an Executive MBA program delivered in a traditional format would likely be surrounded by peers working in local

area industries. The Cornell-Queen’s program joins that Atlanta group with people in different industries across the United States and Canada—public service employees living in D.C., professionals in the oil and gas industries in Texas and Calgary, financial experts from Wall Street in New York, and Microsoft and Boeing managers in Seattle. This breadth of networking provides a competitive differentiator for The Johnson School.

The boardroom learning style also separates the Cornell-Queen’s program from traditional Executive MBA offerings. Demmings explains, “All of the student boardroom sites are muted while the instructor is teaching. During that time, secondary learning takes place. The teams are discussing and answering lower-level questions and when they do pose a question to the professor, it’s been refined and it’s a very high-level, polished question.”

The video-enabled MBA program is also providing significant benefits to Cornell and The Johnson School, foremost among them a rapid return on investment. The tuition for the 17-month Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA is approximately \$100,000. In addition, the program has built-in flexibility that allows it to be modified to meet changing market requirements. “We can quickly and easily move our boardroom to wherever there is interest in the program. All we have to do is remove the Polycom equipment from one Regus center and install it at another center where there is demand,” explains Demmings.

The Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA program expands Cornell’s reach and ability to attract students nationwide and elevates awareness of the school and its contributions by the extensive Cornell alumni network and employers alike.

### A reliable solution

Demmings’s experience with the reliability of Polycom video solutions for nationwide implementation is also supported by the high level of training, sales, and support that Polycom offers. “When it came time to equip Cornell with video technology for the Cornell-Queen’s Executive MBA program, I needed the most reliable two-monitor solution on the market, and that solution was Polycom’s,” he says.

The program uses Polycom's room video conferencing solutions exclusively with Polycom People+Content technology and dual-screen capability, and relies on Polycom multipoint conference bridges for managing and scaling their myriad distance learning sessions.

### Looking forward

Demmings and his team are currently focused on domestic expansion, including possible sites in California, Massachusetts, and Florida. Also in the near term are plans to migrate to IP and begin deploying Polycom® HDX® large room video conferencing solutions. "The video quality offered

by Polycom HDX systems is, of course, a driver, but another important aspect for us is the marketing value. When we're able to say that we offer the Cornell-Queen's Executive MBA over HD video, it eliminates any concerns prospective students have about the quality of the video." Within a few years, Demmings also sees broadening the MBA program to include sites in India and the Middle East.

### Learn more

To find out how Polycom solutions can help your organization, visit us at [www.polycom.com](http://www.polycom.com) or speak with a Polycom Account Representative.

### About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in open standards-based unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solutions for voice and video collaboration, trusted by more than 415,000 customers around the world. Polycom solutions are powered by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform, comprehensive software infrastructure and rich APIs that interoperate with the broadest set of communication, business, mobile and cloud applications and devices to deliver secure face-to-face video collaboration in any environment.

Polycom, Inc.  
1.800.POLYCOM  
[www.polycom.com](http://www.polycom.com)

Polycom Asia Pacific Pte Ltd  
+65 6389 9200  
[www.polycom.asia](http://www.polycom.asia)

Polycom EMEA  
+44 (0)1753 723282  
[www.polycom.co.uk](http://www.polycom.co.uk)

