

Product Strategy review for Sony R&D

Sony's European Broadcast & Professional R&D centre asked Three Steps Forward to lead a product strategy review to select the correct core data networking platform for their professional broadcast equipment.

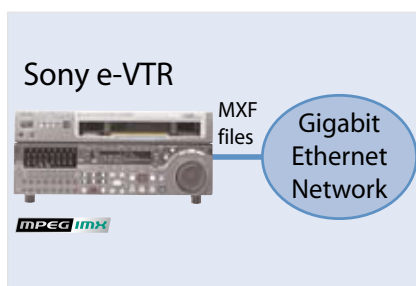
The comprehensive review recommended the adoption of Gigabit Ethernet using an IP based packet protocol. This recommendation was subsequently adopted across the whole of the Sony's professional broadcast equipment range.

“Three Steps Forward was able in a very short period to gain a good understanding of Sony and the requirements of our strategic review.”

**Morgan David, R&D Director,
Sony Broadcast & Professional Europe**

Pictures of the Sony products

Sony VTRs can be connected to a Gigabit Ethernet network (left) for real-time video file transfer using the Sony network card (right).



The client's requirement

The European R&D Centre for Sony Broadcast & Professional (BPE) was undertaking a review of its product platform strategy in relation to high speed networking. It needed to choose a core technology and networking standard that both matched customer needs and delivered high performance to cope with emerging HDTV standards.

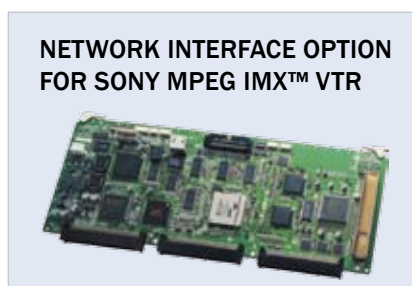
Various groups within the R&D Centre were already working in this area. The Director of BPE R&D, Morgan David, decided that the process would benefit from external input and engaged Three Steps Forward (TSF) to help focus the strategic review.

The actions taken

The investigation included a thorough review of high speed networking technologies and their likely progress over the next 18 to 24 months. The capabilities and growth of each technology was checked to ensure it could deliver the required performance. This was done in collaboration with the internal Sony groups who already had done significant research on networking systems.

Having established the technology capabilities the application side of the strategy was considered. This linked the platform technologies with the various Sony product offerings. We worked with the marketing and engineering groups to develop a view of how each chosen product and application could benefit from high speed networking.

It was also very important to consider the customer's needs and expectations from networked systems and how this might change their way of working.



Finally a detailed competitive analysis was conducted to understand their networking offering. This included both an analysis of the technical capabilities and the marketing message around the competitor's offering. This entailed some visits to various installations and talking to end users about their experiences with networking.

The outputs from the strategic product review therefore covered technology, customers, competitors and potential partners. The review also considered the effects of adding networking to Sony's current product range.

The benefits to the client

The main benefit from the review was detailed report with a recommendation that have been implemented and has proved to be highly beneficial to Sony.

TSF was invited back a year after the review to be informed that the work had been ratified by Sony Japan and would be appearing in Sony's range of products in the future. This has now happened (see pictures bottom left) and has proved to be very successful.

In addition the review produced a detailed picture of the growth potential offered by implementing network technology in the broadcast environment. This has helped focus the research team's efforts. The marketing teams also benefited from access to a large amount of customer and competitive information that they did not previously have.

Ultimately the customer benefited by gained a method to transfer video data at high speed over standard network infrastructure. This has strengthening Sony position as a premier provider of high quality broadcast equipment.

Do you have a clear and robust product strategy to take your company forward? What opportunities are you missing by not having a progressive plan? We specialise in helping companies build a strong and detailed product strategy. Contact us for a no-obligation meeting to discuss your specific requirements.