

# Halo Case Study Brief

## DreamWorks: Unified Studio



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## Who is DreamWorks?

Launched in October 1994 by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen, DreamWorks SKG is a leading producer of live-action motion pictures, animated feature films, network and cable television programming, home video and DVD entertainment and consumer products.

Under the leadership of Mr. Katzenberg, DreamWorks Animation has grown into a computer-generated (CG) animation studio with multiple production locations across several continents. In 2001 DreamWorks released *Shrek*, which skyrocketed to record box office success and won the first-ever Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film. *Shrek2*, released in 2004, broke box office records to become not only the number one animated film of all time, but also the third highest grossing film ever. *Shark Tale*, the company's most recent hit, is the first entirely CG animated feature ever created in Southern California. Its release makes DreamWorks the first studio ever to release two CG films in one year.

## DreamWorks' business situation/need

DreamWorks set an ambitious goal of developing two animated films per year. This objective required engaging the talents of their Glendale, CA campus, Aardman Animation in Bristol, UK and PDI (Pacific Data Images) in Redwood City, California.

Under the DreamWorks umbrella, the Glendale campus started work on *Spirit*, PDI continued work on *Shrek*, while *Chicken Run* was being produced at Aardman. Supporting three sites in all facets of production required significant coordination and resources. In addition, the Production, Technology, and Business groups came from disparate cultures and philosophies, yet there was a need to fully utilize all available talent. DreamWorks attempted to use standard conferencing systems to unify the studio without success. More time was spent repairing miscommunication than developing relationships. The pressure on studio personnel increased, and managing the effort became ever more time consuming. The wear and tear of physical travel in the attempt to achieve unification was overwhelming.

Things worsened as the Sept. 11 disaster and the SARs virus outbreak brought travel to a standstill. It was evident that DreamWorks needed a solution, and DreamWorks Technology was challenged to find it.

In an attempt to find that solution, DreamWorks consulted its vendor experts only to be turned away by companies such as Tandberg and Polycom. It became clear that the technology would have to be developed from the ground up. The subsequent collaboration of DreamWorks and HP resulted in Halo.

## The HP Halo + DreamWorks solution

HP installed Halo Virtual Collaboration Studios in the PDI offices in Redwood City, Bristol, England, and at DreamWorks' Southern California campus in Glendale, California. Up till then, DreamWorks and PDI had used standard video conferencing solutions to communicate.

The Halo Virtual Collaboration Studios allowed the teams to meet face to face frequently and informally to tackle the many issues large and small that must be solved in producing a world-class animated feature.

## What did that mean for DreamWorks?

HP's Halo Virtual Collaboration Studio enabled DreamWorks, Aardman Animation, and PDI to achieve the integration that had eluded them for years. Each site leveraged the other's talent, resources, and experience. As the teams began to meet in the Halo rooms, they started to feel connected and the natural by-product was trust. As trust grew and relationships changed, the organization changed too, until the three sites became a unified studio and a single culture.

Ultimately, the separately managed teams were consolidated under a "one manager" structure, bringing DreamWorks even closer to its goals of tapping into and leveraging far-flung talent and filling the production pipeline with first-rate animated feature films.

HP's Halo Virtual Collaboration Studio enabled DreamWorks, Aardman Animation, and PDI to achieve the goal of two movie releases per year. And DreamWorks successfully merged disparate cultures in order to tap a larger pool of talent. The use of Halo allowed DreamWorks to create a truly unified Virtual Studio.

## For more information

[www.hp.com/halo](http://www.hp.com/halo)

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