



Syncro Services Steps Up Productivity with Telestream Vantage

Calls Vantage the backbone of its digital content services company and credits its workflow automation as key operational benefit

"Perfection is the goal. We never let any file go out if it doesn't meet that standard. To do so would be to have missed the mark completely. We trust Vantage to do this critical job reliably, even as it ingests more and more media files into its automated workflow."

Ilan Kometz,
Chief Operating Officer
Syncro Services Digital Media,
in New York, NY

From their midtown Manhattan office, Syncro Services Digital Media processes and manages between 1,000 to 5,000 HD media files per week, most of which are 15-, 30- or 60-second commercials slated for air on network TV, local affiliates, cable networks and OTT services.

The process begins when top advertisers and media companies send their commercials in a variety of digital formats to Syncro Services for processing. With scheduled media buys and airdates looming, Syncro performs whatever post production tasks are required to prepare and deliver the finished spots to broadcasters for playout.

The Initiative

As part of the end-to-end process, Syncro Services often needs to create multiple versions of each spot. In some cases, 150 to 200 different post processes need to be performed in order for a particular spot to meet all of the technical specifications today's broadcasters require. Work orders for incoming spots typically request a mix of digital versions including:

- Different standards, formats, frame rates, codecs and wrappers
- Slated and/or non-slated
- Closed captioned or non-captioned
- Subtitled or without subtitles
- Watermarked and/or non-watermarked
- CALM compliant audio tracks

While this process would be time-consuming and labor-intensive, Syncro Services' technicians are able to move quickly and achieve a high throughput—even on their busiest days—because they've automated their 24/7-workflow with the Vantage Media Processing Platform from Telestream.

The Solution

Syncro's Vantage workflow is comprised of the following modules:

- Vantage Media Processing Platform
- Lightspeed server for accelerated processing
- Post Producer Automated Content Assembly for tasks like adding slates and tags
- MacCaption, a friendly, desktop closed captioning system
- Telestream Switch for quality control



When it comes to expanding its capital equipment and infrastructure, Syncro wants any new equipment it puts into service to start paying for itself immediately, and produce a return on investment (ROI) within six months.

This was the case with Syncro's Vantage, which paid for itself quickly by:

- Processing greater volumes of media files quickly for greater profitability
- Operating in a compact footprint within the space-challenged New York office space
- Holding the line on labor costs since very few technicians need to be on-site, even on the busiest days.
- Running reliably without costly downtime or other operational delays
- Keeping up with technological advances through software upgrades

"Vantage handles Syncro's current workload very effectively. Compared to the two hours it used to take to manually prepare a single tape-based commercial for distribution, Vantage only takes about 2.5 minutes to process each digital file including its many iterations."

The Workflow

When Vantage first arrived in 2014, Syncro's long-standing manual, tape-based operation gave way to faster, more accurate digital media processing. When Kometz joined Syncro two years ago, he pushed the system further by taking full advantage of the advanced decision making and media analysis capabilities within Vantage.

Working with Telestream, Kometz pushed their Vantage to a whole new level of automation. He eliminated many points of hands-on involvement by having Vantage assume responsibility for a broader range of analytical tasks including:

- Determining what versions need to be generated for each media file based on the CSV-formatted work order
- Recognizing the source file it needs as soon as it arrives in a watch folder and ingesting it for processing
- Directing the media along the appropriate workflow for processing by various Vantage modules, such as Post Producer and MacCaption
- Proactively identifying and fixing the technical issues that it can fix
- Flagging files that have technical issues or anomalies that need human attention



With their custom Vantage workflows, the Syncro team can rely on the final deliverables to meet the uncompromised quality standards that have sustained their business and reputation for close to six decades. In those rare instances when a file doesn't pass muster in the final quality control (QC) evaluation, the workflow makes it easy for Syncro's technicians to trace it back to the source and make the necessary modifications.

With its painstaking dedication to quality control, a Syncro technician also performs QC on the incoming media as well as any files that Vantage sidelines for visual inspection using Telestream Switch. For example, if the work order calls for stereo audio, but the file has 8-channel audio, or any other technical discrepancy, Vantage will notify the technician on duty that there is an issue that requires attention. On the final output, a digital QC evaluation is also performed to double-check that all of the work order specs have been met.

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Future Roadmap

Since the media and entertainment industry is very dynamic, and its technical requirements and resolutions are ever changing, Syncro is always developing new ways to shore up its core business while laying the groundwork to handle technical challenges on the horizon.

While their Vantage system handles downconverting of 4K source files, such as spots shot with the RED 4K camera to HD, Kometz is thinking ahead to the day when 4K becomes the industry-standard delivery format, and/or broadcasters begin broadcasting in native 4K/Ultra HD (UHD).

"The most important choice we made was to go with Telestream Vantage to automate our workflow. We don't have to worry that we'll paint ourselves into a corner because the technology keeps evolving. If we want to get into something new down the road, like dynamic ad insertion (DAI) for broadcast video on demand, we can just add on the Vantage software module that handles that. Our customers appreciate knowing that we can keep up with their demands."

To learn more

To get more information about Telestream or products mentioned, call 1-530-470-1300, or visit:

Syncro Services Digital Media's website:

- <http://www.syncroservices.com/>

Telestream website:

- <http://www.telestream.net/vantage/overview.htm>

