VIDEOCRAFT GOES MOBILE FOR RED BULL CHARITY RUN

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Wings for Life World Run is the unique charity event that raises money by running for those who can't. The twist? Everyone runs worldwide, on the same day, at the same time creating a race of epic proportions with runners chased by Catcher Cars to literally catch the runners not running towards a finish line but away from the finish line and culminating in just one lone runner left at the end. The OB for the Australian run, held in Victoria, was provided by Videocraft.

Wings for Life World Run's Australian production company was the award-winning Screencraft. The company's Founder and Director, Michael Fardell, explained some of the challenges involved in this year's event, "The run kicked off at 1pm in Austria – home of Red Bull – which was 9pm in Melbourne. As the runners set off and try to get as far away as possible the Catcher Cars follow thirty minutes later. Bearing in mind the logistics with this event runners can get up to 80km from the start point so we needed the most flexible and nimble OB solution possible. I'm delighted to say Videocraft gave us just that."

After discussions with Videocraft's MD, James Taylor, the company provided not only its fully-loaded, state of the art OB truck for the event but also an ingenious and cost effective mobile broadcasting solution.

Fardell continued, "Videocraft had four wired OB cameras at the start line. Then, once the race started they had four mobile cameras on motorbikes following the runners and doing interviews along the way. The key here was that all the links were provided by 4G bonded streaming solutions."

On the ground and on the motorbikes, Videocraft deployed four Teradek Bond 2 Encoders that were securely linked to Teradek Sputnik servers in the cloud. The Sputnik servers were in turn downlinked to the Videocraft OB truck and decoded using Teradek Cube decoders.

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Fardell added, "This was a brilliant, cost effective and efficient solution as we were able to broadcast the OB using 4G on the cameras and didn't need to use helicopters which would have been tricky at night and very expensive. Once the footage arrived in

Videocraft's truck they switched and dealt with it as they would any normal camera source."

Although the OB solution was completely reliant on mobile communication lines, Videocraft was still able to factor in redundancy and mobile dead zones by using multiple carriers and extracting the highest possible data rates.

Fardell commented, "The data rates Videocraft were able to get were so high that we did the entire broadcast in HD. Quite a feat. Once we'd ingested the footage we then sent it to the Austrian world feed and received back the World Programme so people in Australia would watch the entire worldwide event. Again, quite a logistical feat."

In total there were 34 outside broadcasts worldwide all with no fixed end point and all of which covered a significant amount of terrain. This complicated set of variables meant advanced planning was key.

Fardell explained, "Videocraft did their homework beforehand and checked there was mobile coverage with at least one carrier in all areas. The fact that there was enabled the four mobile cameras to be switched live in 4G and for me showed us the future for certain types of OB jobs. As this type of mobile solution becomes more robust it will only improve. This also means companies like Videocraft can offer live links for events at a reasonable cost that previously

would have cost thousands and involved helicopters and satellite trucks."

In reality, for what was a very broad event geographically it was only the first 500 metres that were covered by fixed wired cameras. The other 79.5km was all covered by Videocraft's mobile 4G camera solution and OB truck.

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Michael Fardell concluded, "I can't speak highly enough about Videocraft or the mobile OB solution they provided. There were no drop-outs, black-outs or time lost for refueling. The only downtime during the entire event was a two minute battery change on the cameras. The 4G solution they provided us with was slick and efficient and proved to me that a new era in mobile broadcasting has arrived."

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To see the Red Bull 2016 Wings for Life World Run go to:
https://vimeo.com/168701854
Picture credits: The Videocraft mobile 4G OB solution on the 2016 Wings for Life World Run