

Cisco Reaps Rewards of Synergy with WebEx Meeting Applications

Executive Summary

The acquisition and subsequent rollout of Cisco® WebEx® services throughout the Cisco internal organization in 2007 has resulted in rapid adoption and high user demand. Integration of WebEx meeting applications with Cisco Unified Communications Solutions is currently estimated to deliver cost savings of \$3.6 million per quarter. Additional time, travel, and productivity savings have been reported from virtually every deployment team. Only Cisco offers customers the choice and flexibility of on-demand and on-premises communications and collaboration services based on industry-leading application software, services, and networks.

Background

Cisco helps people make powerful connections. The company's hardware, software, and service offerings are used to create the Internet solutions that make networks possible — providing easy access to information everywhere, every time. Cisco continuously innovates — developing

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— Bailey Szeto, manager of strategy and architecture for communication and collaboration, Cisco

industry-leading products and solutions in the company's core areas of routing and switching, as well as in advanced technologies such as application networking, digital media, mobility, security, storage networking, TelePresence, unified communications, and video.

WebEx Acquisition Creates New Opportunities

With its purchase of WebEx in May 2007, Cisco continues its history of carefully acquiring technology companies that extend its industry leadership. The WebEx portfolio of on-demand collaboration applications and its network-based delivery platform play a natural role in the Cisco vision for unified communications — enabling the human network to effectively collaborate everywhere, every time, on every device.

Cisco planned the integration of WebEx into the company in a way that would deliver fast benefit and result in rapid feedback and refinement of the entire offering. WebEx was deployed in June 2007 for select teams to determine how they used the application, both internally and with customers. Adoption was swift and universally positive.

In every case, Cisco team members have been successful with new ways of communicating, collaborating, shrinking processes, and creating even greater efficiency. Cisco plans to use these results to develop exciting new collaboration strategies and technology integrations.

Integrated Technologies Create New Solutions

With WebEx meeting applications, Cisco adds a powerful suite of on-demand online meeting tools to its unified communications product portfolio. Additionally, the WebEx network-based technology offers the ideal platform for expanding and using both companies' product offerings to advantage for customers and partners.

Cisco WebEx services are delivered through an agnostic, Web-based interface, ideally suited for integration with Cisco IP networking solutions and components. Integrating Cisco Unified Communications with the WebEx network-based platform has resulted in a transparent, unified IP communications and collaboration tool that virtually eliminates phone toll charges. When amortized over hundreds of thousands of meetings conducted with participants around the globe, the potential cost savings of the solution are staggering.

Cisco TelePresence technology has also been used in concert with the WebEx application to bring live video into the web collaboration environment. Video feeds from Cisco TelePresence centers are linked into WebEx, enabling users to participate from their desktop. This integration with the WebEx application significantly expands the reach of Cisco TelePresence technology.

Cisco customers now have their choice of options for online collaboration solutions. The Cisco long-time web meeting tool, Cisco Unified MeetingPlace[®] conferencing, already offers on-premises web meeting capabilities and is used by Cisco and our customers around the globe. Customers also have the choice to deploy the WebEx meeting application as an on-demand software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution. And customers with Cisco Unified MeetingPlace conferencing already in place can deploy a blended model that includes their on-premises audio conferencing system with Cisco WebEx on-demand collaboration services.

Nimble Deployment Leads to Remarkable Results

Bailey Szeto, manager of strategy and architecture for communication and collaboration at Cisco, confirms these results, estimating that internal use of the integrated Cisco Unified Communications Solution, which now includes Cisco WebEx meetings, will result in \$3.6 million in toll-charge savings per quarter. "We have had a persistent demand for Cisco WebEx accounts outside of this initial deployment," says Szeto. "Teams are seeing very rapid return in terms of travel savings and productivity increases by being able to reach out more easily to internal and external customers."

The appeal of Cisco WebEx meetings even reaches beyond Cisco. One sales division has established regular WebEx training sessions on Cisco solutions for its partners. The trainings have proven so popular that Cisco partners have begun inviting their customers into the Cisco sessions, extending the training resources available to the entire channel.

Since its initial deployment, Cisco has been enthusiastic in its adoption of the WebEx meeting application. According to Nancy Krause, a member of the WebEx customer service team supporting the Cisco deployment, the Cisco initial WebEx usage in June 2007 totaled 8000 minutes. In March 2008, it reached almost 6 million minutes. At this rate of increase, Cisco will become the largest consumer of WebEx services by mid-2008.

The Future Is Bright for Cisco WebEx Meeting Applications

Predicted cost savings for Cisco in terms of travel and elimination of phone toll charges are in the millions per quarter after just 8 months of use. Increases in efficiency and productivity have been documented, even in pilot programs enabled by the WebEx application.

Cisco will continue its successful deployment of WebEx services into other teams and divisions, relying on ingenuity and innovation to discover new ways to improve processes and extend the Cisco global reach. And according to Ned Preston, director of finance at Cisco, employees are increasingly asking for new Cisco WebEx accounts.



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Cisco scales customer resources and cultivates partner collaboration with the Cisco, WebEx Technology Group

About the Cisco Commercial Central sales area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CISCO WEBEX SERVICES

- Team headquarters: Southfield, Michigan
- Target market: Small & Medium Businesses
- Cisco WebEx Training Center, Cisco WebEx Meeting Center™
- Program launch: 2007

SUMMARY

- The Cisco® Commercial Central sales area needed an online solution that would scale resources to reach more customers and partners across a large territory. Using Cisco WebEx® Training Center, the sales division has reduced the number of live sales events by half and increased the overall number of customer interactions. This step has resulted in significant cost savings while reaching hundreds of customers via online events.
- The Cisco Commercial Central sales area serves small and medium businesses (SMBs) across 13 states. Collaborating closely with channel partners, Cisco has developed a product and support model to reach the SMB audience, an audience that now represents just over 25 percent of the company's business and continues to grow.

The Challenge

With thousands of customers across a large geographic region, the Cisco Commercial Central sales area is constantly searching for new ways to scale its operations in order to make information about Cisco solutions more available to customers and partners. Historically, the sales team held live sales events that were labor-intensive and expensive, yet often reached just a handful of customers at a time. The group also found that it simply could not visit all of the customer locations across its sales territory. "Though we often held rudimentary audio-only webinars, we felt we could really improve on this front," says Alison Gleeson, area vice president. "It became particularly clear to us after seeing the success that a small but significant competitor was having with online demos." The Cisco Commercial Central sales area needed a way to scale its sales and technical resources in

order to reach more customers and partners more efficiently.

The Solution

The Cisco Commercial Central sales area was one of the first groups within Cisco to implement WebEx after its acquisition. The group first used WebEx for internal meetings, but quickly began to leverage the robust feature set available in WebEx for communicating with partners and customers. By integrating video into its online meetings, the group was able to establish a more collaborative and dynamic environment for product demos and customer and partner training. "We're so happy with the results we've seen," says Gleeson. "Most of us can't get to southern Indiana or Lincoln, Nebraska on a regular basis. But with WebEx, it feels like we're right there."

Product Sales Specialist Dave Kroger led Gleeson's team in creating and executing weekly "Groundhog Thursday" training sessions for partners and customers, with each session focusing on a specific Cisco technology. The schedule is established months in advance, so that potential participants always know which topics will be covered during a particular timeframe. As a result, a growing number of customers, partners, and Cisco employees have the opportunity to participate every Thursday in an interactive training session on that week's topic.

The powerful features in WebEx Training Center have proven to be an ideal way to showcase even the most complex Cisco products and solutions. Presenters rely heavily on the video, chat, and

other interactive features to engage participants. “Customers can see our offerings, ask questions, and get the answers, all in real time,” says Gleeson. “And WebEx enables the participants to drive the flow of the demonstration, helping ensure that each session is unique and answers the needs of the participants.”

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The Benefits

Using Cisco WebEx services for its customer demos, the team estimates it has reduced the number of offsite live sales events by half, while increasing its customer reach and partner involvement in demand generation. This approach has enabled the marketing group to cut costs. Prior to its weekly online training sessions and other Cisco- and partner-led events, the group produced numerous onsite events to reach its customers. These events, which normally reached an average of just 25 customers per session, cost the group US\$2500 or more each. By implementing WebEx Training Center, the Cisco Commercial Central sales area now reaches two to three times the number of customers per online event at minimal cost. These cost savings have helped the sales division meet its expense targets for three consecutive quarters.

The Cisco WebEx solution has also enabled the group to scale its sales expertise exponentially. Traditionally, product sales specialists were aligned with a specific territory and had to travel constantly on sales calls. The frequent travel not only meant time away from customers, but also created significant quality of life issues. “WebEx has enabled us to transform many of our technology experts into virtual sales specialists,” says Gleeson. “By virtualizing key experts, we’ve been able to bring them to more customers than we could’ve done via live interactions or events.”

The Cisco WebEx-enabled Groundhog Thursday sessions and other Cisco WebEx events have been a hit with Cisco partners, providing them with a new benefit to bring to their customers. Channel partners were constantly looking for resources to support their own training and demand generation needs. The weekly presentations are an ideal solution to both challenges. “We work closely with our partners, so that they can get their customers involved,” says Gleeson. “Our partners can invite customers to one of our sessions, or we can create a special partner demo event. We watch the presentation together via WebEx, and then we can talk about how the partner supplies solutions.” Partners are so excited about the Cisco-sponsored events that many are beginning to adopt WebEx for initiatives within their own organizations.

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The Future

The division plans to build on the success of its weekly online events by integrating new Cisco WebEx technologies to produce even more interactive experiences for team members, customers, and partners. “We’re really looking forward to implementing Cisco WebEx Connect for both internal and customer-facing initiatives,” says Gleeson. “We want to create customized virtual meeting places and portals where people can really connect to share materials and ideas. WebEx has the tools to make that vision a reality.”

Highlights:

- Using WebEx, the Cisco Commercial Central sales area reduced the number of live sales events by half while reaching hundreds of customers per online session.
- WebEx has enabled the group to cultivate a deeper collaboration with its channel partners, enabling it to meet the needs of SMB customers more effectively.
- The group has been able to scale its sales specialists, enabling these experts to engage with more customers more easily without traveling.



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