



We have around 240 staff worldwide and using WebEx for internal training purposes saves on facilities hiring and producing materials as well as the travel cost of getting everyone in one place.

— Arne Klein, Product Manager, Intershop

Intershop slashes costs and boosts worldwide communications with WebEx Meeting Center.



INDUSTRY

Software

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

Meeting Center

SUMMARY

Since implementing WebEx, Intershop has improved communications in every department, worldwide, while cutting hiring, training, and travel costs.

ABOUT INTERSHOP

Line of Business

E-commerce software

Headquarters

Jena, Germany

Number of Employees

500

WebEx Customer Since 2000

Intershop is a leading provider of Unified Commerce Management software for managing e-commerce processes across the extended enterprise. Founded in 1992, Intershop has over a decade's experience driving innovation in e-commerce. Its software automates online commerce processes across geographical and technical borders of the enterprise.

Headquartered in Jena, Germany, and with 10 global offices, from San Francisco to London to Hong Kong, Intershop's business is built on providing world-class service and support—however or wherever a company's business expands.

The Challenge

Intershop has an extensive team of offices, consultants and implementation partners and serves worldwide customers such as HP, TRW, and Otto. In trying to reach employees, partners and prospects around the world, Intershop wanted to find a better way to communicate more effectively while maximizing time and resources.

According to Arne Klein, Product Manager at Intershop, costs were less of an issue during the boom of the dot-com era—a lot of travel was a standard part of business. “In the current economy,” Klein comments, “we needed an alternative to business travel that would allow us to work smarter and more efficiently whilst maintaining a solid communications network both internally and with customers and partners.”

The Solution

Intershop decided on WebEx Meeting Center to communicate with its offices worldwide, and to roll out strategically important projects such as roadmaps and company blueprints.

“Over the past 9 months, we've been spending time training staff on how to use WebEx,” says Klein. “It's very easy to use, and we find that around 80% of our employees are confident with the service after just half an hour of training.”

The sales team in EMEA used the service to schedule “WebEx with an Expert” sessions. These online meetings are aimed at existing customers and OEM partners, and contain in-depth information on specific products and issues.

“These sessions mean that we can use our expert knowledge much more efficiently, technical specialists can now communicate effectively with more geographically dispersed customers from one central location,” explains Klein. “A major benefit of WebEx is being able to reach many more people much easier.”

The Benefits

Using WebEx Meeting Center has helped to get the right information to Intershop's employees and partners quickly and has improved its lead generation process.

“Whereas before, we had to visit the clients to show them our software products, we can now give a brief overview via the web,” comments Klein. “If there is a sufficient interest from the client and if



our solution seems to fit their needs, we can then follow it up with a much more focused onsite meeting. In this way we filter the client visits we do, increasing the percentage of those meetings that result in a sale.” This “pre-qualification” benefit of using WebEx saves on resources affecting the bottom line.

“A major benefit of WebEx is being able to reach many more people much easier.”

— Arne Klein, Product Manager, Intershop

Not only are employees and partners getting the information they need to do business much faster, the savings are extended to meeting space and materials. Klein explains, “We have around 240 staff worldwide and using WebEx for internal training purposes saves on facilities, hiring, and producing materials as well as the travel costs of getting everyone in one place.”

Savings for Intershop have come not only in terms of costs but also in terms of sales productivity. One German sales consultant estimates that in one case he saved the cost of an international flight, four days of activity and other expenses associated only with travel. The WebEx session took just three hours to prepare, plus the presentation time. From four days to just a few hours is a significant savings.

Intershop has found the low infrastructure cost and time investment of setting up and hosting a WebEx meeting has significantly improved its global communication. Every department now has WebEx users, from engineering and sales, to product management and consulting.

The Future

Intershop plans to expand its use of WebEx services to its customers and partners via its website. As part of the corporate strategy, the website will enable customers worldwide to initiate a real time collaborative session with product managers—these sessions will include anything from technical queries to more in depth software workshops.

“We feel that since WebEx has transformed the way in which we communicate as a business, the next step is to allow those we want to interact with, our prospects, to really make the most of this transformation,” says Klein. “It’s likely that the recent increase in our use of the service will continue as WebEx becomes Intershop’s platform for real-time collaboration.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- Intershop takes advantage of WebEx to speed up lead generation, pre-qualify clients, and provide better, more timely training to employees and partners.
- Intershop has improved global communications in every department by taking advantage of easy to use WebEx solutions.
- The company plans to create a website to expand WebEx use to enable customers worldwide to initiate real-time collaborative sessions with product managers.