

just a link

About Just a Link

Headquarters:
Paris, France

Lines of business:
Online Training and Support

Target markets:
Small businesses and
extended enterprises

WebEx service in use:
Meeting Center

Has been a WebEx customer since:
October 2000

Just a Link Offers Online Training and Support Services to Users in France

"Flexibilité", "Réactivité," and "Profitabilité" form the new anthem and strategic goals for Pierre Boudignon, CEO of Just a Link. The French company provides one-to-one and one-to-many online training courses and remote managed computer services for a variety of professional and office software packages. Created in 1986, Just a Link has a prestigious list of corporate clients including Alcatel, Euronext, and Aventis Pharma. The company has offices in Paris and in the Auvergne; a region located 400 kilometres south of Paris that is more famous for its ancient mountains and green pastures than for its high tech industry.

The Challenge

Being a successful and profitable company in a business based on services is tough. And as Pierre Boudignon can attest to, the software training and support service industry is no exception. In a competitive market, companies are pressed to reduce prices, which means finding ways to reduce costs to stay profitable. Companies also find themselves having to improve trainer skills, offer a wider range of products and improve course availability in order to stay competitive. To make matters worse, customers are finding it increasingly difficult to even find the time to receive training amid their busy schedules.

With so many variables and large fixed costs of operation in traditional classroom training, there was little margin for error. Boudignon realised, "Growing my business could develop into a huge cost machine requiring more trainers, visiting more locations, delivering increasingly complex training courses, and requiring more technical support staff responding to an every growing number of telephone calls. Scaling this business was going to be very expensive, both in terms of cash and people. I realised I had to find another way to manage my business."

The Solution

Boudignon knew what he wanted in a solution. "What I needed was something to do the job, not a feat of complex engineering. I wanted something that worked like a car. Something that I know will work and is reliable; but I don't need to know how every part works to make it run."

After a thorough competitive review and some performance testing, Just a Link decided on WebEx. According to Boudignon, "It came down to two key criteria. We needed a system that was easy to use by computer novices and was also reliable and dependable with full redundancy that guaranteed that our online courses would never fail. WebEx won on both counts."

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Pierre Boudignon
CEO, Just a Link



A New Way to Deliver Training and Support Services – Saving Time, Travel, and Euros

Boudignon decided to redesign his business model around the innovative concept of a remote service delivery and training platform. Using WebEx, his trainers and technical staff, located in various parts of France, meet with customers online to receive one-on-one or one-to-many product training or help with technical problems. By visiting a common URL they can share their desktops and have productive, interactive sessions.

"Instead of just trying to cram as many people as possible into each class to achieve economies of scale and reach profitability, we are now able to deliver extremely high quality, one-to-one training to hundreds of people anywhere in France, at any given point in time," says Boudignon. "Students can go at the pace that suits them best, not the entire class; moreover, trainers can take over their desktops to show them step by step how to proceed. This is real personal handholding. And it translates into greater repeat business."

The Benefits

The new WebEx-based training product range has been a tremendous success; it has helped reduce labour costs and improved instructor and course scheduling. By eliminating wasted travel time, productivity has grown for both the company and its customers. Moreover, the improved scheduling flexibility means that busy executives who could not take time away from work can now get the training they need.

Just a Link is also now able to hire training and technical staff from outside Paris. "WebEx has freed us from the usual constraints of location and travel time; this has allowed us to go and source great technical and computer training staff from regions where labour is less expensive and easier to find, keeping our standards high but our cost base lower than our competitors," explains the CEO.

The company isn't just saving money using WebEx; it's also able to grow its business. Instead of limiting sales to the Paris region, Just a Link can now sell its entire product range anywhere in France, without a lot of costly offices. The online service also benefits existing clients with multiple remote offices, or with remote workers. Boudignon states, "We have even helped companies in Germany and the UK that needed instant emergency intervention."

Just a Link now always tries to get their customers to use the WebEx service because it's more efficient for both parties and that translates into better customer service. According to Boudignon, "It's not just about our margins, this goes much further than our own financial goals. Our WebEx-based service products have a clear advantage in terms of how our client can organise their schedules and integrate our courseware within their organisation. For them it's just so much easier to find an hour's time, especially for very busy executives."

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Pierre Boudignon
CEO, Just a Link

"This is very positive all around. Repeat business and customer retention are strong indicators of customer satisfaction. We have created products that are better suited for our clients' needs; we increased our sales territory, lowered our costs and protect our margins. We simply would not have developed such a business without WebEx," says Boudignon.

Return on Investment

Using WebEx has allowed Just a Link's business to grow and prosper. Boudignon comments, "We estimate that if we had to develop a product training offering like ours in a traditional classroom style we would lose at least 30% of gross margins, meaning we simply would not make any profits. Courses would be prohibitively expensive and we wouldn't see the same number of customer. Between staff costs, travel costs and related expenditures, each fully-loaded training course can cost us around €1,000 - €1,500 to deliver."

Just-a-Link has now sold hundreds of hours of online training to prestigious companies including Alcatel, Euronext, Aventis Pharma, and many others.

The Future

Given the success thus far, Just a Link has plans to expand its training and support services even further. The business model has proven itself and the WebEx technology allows for additional courses and customer reach without a lot of added costs. Boudignon explains, "With such structural costs, now I can really start scaling up."



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