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— Mark Phillips, Vice President of Strategy, StarCite

StarCite speeds the sales cycle and saves a half a million dollars with WebEx web meeting applications.



INDUSTRY

High Tech

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

Meeting Center, Training Center, Event Center, Presentation Studio

SUMMARY

StarCite has saved over \$500,000 by eliminating travel costs and keeping employees more productive at their desks. Sales leads have increased as access to decision makers has expanded, and currently 80% of all product trainings are conducted with WebEx.

ABOUT StarCite

Line of Business

Technology and services for the meetings and events industry

Headquarters

Philadelphia, PA

Number of Employees

100

Target Market

Corporations, meeting management companies, associations and travel suppliers

WebEx Customer Since

December 2002

StarCite, Inc. offers a comprehensive suite of e-Products and services to the meeting and events industry. Over 400 corporations, associations, and meeting companies use StarCite’s services, including its online portal, linking meeting industry buyers and suppliers. StarCite oversees this vast operation with a staff of just 100 employees located in four primary and twelve remote offices around the United States. With a strategy of acquiring new companies that extend and innovate the meeting and event services it provides, StarCite serves a global audience and has doubled its revenues every year since 2001.

The Challenge

As a small business, StarCite needed to work hard to stay responsive to its large customer base and its extended organization, which included a network of partners and suppliers with whom StarCite regularly collaborated. Its staff was spread out geographically, separated by large distances as well as time zones. This made even basic corporate communications, training, and collaboration challenging. The sales team was also spending unproductive time traveling to customer sites to demo StarCite’s products, close sales, and provide follow-on support. And this was nothing compared to the travel costs the company was incurring. StarCite needed a web meeting solution that supported the large amount of communications they engaged in, decreased travel costs, and kept sales and training staff in the office where they could be more productive.

The Solution

According to Mark Phillips, Vice President of Strategy for StarCite, “It started with us saying our training had to be better. Then we realized we needed to be more cost-effective all around. Now WebEx is business critical for all our functions.” The company considers itself a leader in technology adoption, and it saw the benefits of web meeting applications implemented in virtually every one of its business processes. StarCite’s sales staff adopted WebEx Meeting Center to qualify, pre-qualify and also go back and clarify information with clients on a daily basis. The company adopted WebEx Training Center for both internal and external training, replacing their previous method of traveling to customer sites in what Phillips describes as “a nightmarish process.” Now it is a rare and “costly exception to engage in training without Training Center.”

WebEx has also become a key collaboration tool for StarCite to engage with its technology partners on new product and service development. “We’re a technology leader in our space,” says Phillips, “and that means we have to work with and integrate technical teams all over the world to put our processes together. We frankly couldn’t do it without WebEx.” Other ways StarCite has integrated WebEx web meeting applications into their business processes includes using WebEx Event Center for press conferences and virtual product launches, and company-wide corporate communications. “We even engage in merger and acquisition due diligence by

having companies demo their software products and services back to us using WebEx,” says Phillips. “We rely on WebEx to handle our customer relations, policy and procedure rollouts, and even our HR benefits rollouts. Our HR department is one person and there is no way they could service employees all over the country without WebEx.”

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StarCite now does 80% of all its product training using WebEx Training Center, claiming it greatly expands the breadth and capabilities of their teams. “We planned a live training back in 1999, which was relatively small in scale,” says Phillips. “It took three months to deploy and was a very painful experience—and that was a small training initiative. The larger trainings we do now would be impossible without WebEx. The time and costs savings are phenomenal.”

The Benefits

According to Phillips, “We did a study last year and discovered that Webex has saved us over a half million dollars. Those gains were from keeping employees in their office where they could productively communicate with clients, customers, and one another without having to incur travel costs.” StarCite also saw its sales pipeline increase because its teams don’t have to hunt down decision makers to take a meeting or scramble to find an Internet connection to demo the product. “Now we can initiate a WebEx session and be assured that they can see what we want them to see, even if the decision makers are in multiple locations,” says Phillips.

The Future

StarCite’s future plans for WebEx include a large-scale project to develop and deliver a new range of services, requiring collaboration with a number of technical teams in India. According to Phillips, “StarCite loves WebEx. Two years after our relationship began, it’s hard for me to imagine how we could even think of bringing on additional companies all over the world without having Webex to support our communications, collaboration, training, and support needs.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- StarCite is a small business that needed to communicate and collaborate with a vast organization of customers, partners, and employees located around the globe.
- The company saved over a half million dollars by eliminating travel costs and conducting product demonstrations, trainings, and corporate communications with WebEx web meeting applications.
- StarCite has adopted and now relies heavily on WebEx for use throughout its business processes, including engaging with its technology partners on new product and service development.