

TOSHIBA

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— Oscar Koenders, General Manager, Toshiba Computer Systems

Toshiba Computer Systems increases marketing efficiency with WebEx.



INDUSTRY

High technology

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

Meeting Center

SUMMARY

Toshiba optimized its business communications using WebEx, realizing significant ROI, as well as improving employee morale and productivity—and results.

ABOUT TOSHIBA

Line of Business

Advanced electronics that enhance the home, office, industry and health care environments

Headquarters

Neuss, Germany

Number of Employees

1,000

WebEx Customer Since 2003

With its strength in innovation, Toshiba has been at the cutting edge of technology for more than a hundred years. As a global corporation, it is active in many different product areas—from multi-mega-watt power stations down to the latest in power-saving miniaturized chip technologies. The Toshiba Computer Systems division, based in Neuss, Germany, markets a range of mobile computing solutions, such as notebooks and Pocket PCs.

One year ago, Toshiba Computer Systems decided that in order to optimize its business efficiencies, it needed a communications tool befitting one of the greatest technology innovators in the world.

The Challenge

Regardless of size, every company is faced with the dichotomy of cost cutting, while outperforming the competition. Toshiba is no exception. When Oscar Koenders, General Manager of the Toshiba Computer Systems Marketing Division decided to enhance the operational efficiency of the business, he tasked a trusted communications consultant, Giuseppe Flavio Fabiani, to troubleshoot the likely cost and time deltas.

Fabiani successfully pinpointed where budgets were slipping. The major areas turned out to be the expense and time of business travel associated with marketing, an essential component that keeps Toshiba Computer Systems ahead of the competition. Fabiani was faced with the problem of plugging these inefficiencies without hindering the marketing department’s ability to continue to collaborate

and share ideas freely. One collaborative communications service emerged as the best option for Toshiba to support both its external marketing activities, as well as its internal communications in a highly professional manner.

The Solution

In March 2003, Toshiba considered 5 different web conferencing solution providers. After careful consideration, WebEx Meeting Center was ultimately chosen for its ability to handle multimedia content, the ease of integrating the service with existing IT systems, and focus on total service experience, especially post-sales.

One of the features that Toshiba appreciates most is the high performance of the WebEx MediaTone Network, which enables quality transmission of multimedia presentations, streaming video and audio, and 3D animations. “The fact is, the MediaTone Network upon which WebEx is based, guarantees that the data, audio and video integration is consistently of a high quality, whether the meeting is taking place in Germany or on the other side of the world,” said Koenders.

Typically, Toshiba Computer Systems virtual meetings are attended by three or four people, comprising a mixture of employees from both internal marketing and other subsidiaries within Toshiba, as well as external agencies. WebEx is used as a platform to showcase new products, present marketing ideas and budgets, and get live feedback. With the annotation and white board features, attendees can demonstrate and share their ideas, enabling

the team to actively collaborate and agree upon solutions. Koenders remarks, “Pre-WebEx, meetings were conducted either on conference calls or face-to-face, and the meeting actions were passed around via an inordinate amount of emails. Now we tend to leave meetings with a result, not an action list.”

A key criterion for choosing WebEx was the flexibility to integrate with current IT systems—especially the email client, which, in Toshiba’s case was Lotus Notes. Koenders adds, “It’s pointless having the capacity to seamlessly meet virtually if you have to manually coordinate your calendar with every meeting you set up. WebEx had the flexibility to enable users to start a meeting with a single click from Lotus Notes, and to schedule meetings directly from email address books.”

For Koenders, WebEx focus on the total service experience, and in particular the post-sale training services was also a crucial driver for adopting WebEx Meeting Center. “When a company implements a new technology, there is a danger for employees to adopt it in a piecemeal fashion, and not to see the full benefits for a long time. This was not the case with WebEx,” remarks Koenders. “As part of the contract, we were provided with a month of training courses to ensure that all the employees reached a professional level of understanding at the same time. The WebEx training was backed up by an internal awareness program, as well as clear instructions on which trips would be replaced, and which tasks use WebEx. For example, we decided to use WebEx for our marketing budget and website development planning.”

The Benefits

Toshiba Computer Systems has seen a significant ROI from using WebEx both in terms of travel time, associated travel cost savings and in improving the morale and outcome of employee “meetings.” Fabiani calculated detailed ‘before and after’ analyses of the savings as a result of implementing WebEx, and the ROI statistics speak volumes in terms of the hard savings achieved through WebEx.

Time Savings

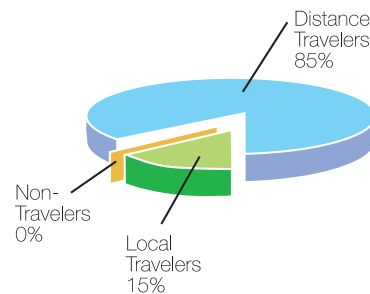


Fig 1: Value created from travel timesavings¹

By using WebEx, Toshiba saved 866 hours in the first year. This translates into 115 full working days. They also saved 75% in overall travel costs, and increased employee productivity by 25%. By eliminating time spent travelling to meetings, members of the marketing group were getting more work done in a given day.

The Future

Koenders has a great deal of foresight for the potential use of virtual meetings; the statistics indicate that increased adoption within Toshiba would have a hugely positive impact in terms of increased productivity. Flavio takes a user-centric approach

to his vision and firmly believes that training is the key to achieving it.

“The next step in WebEx adoption is to launch an ‘open coffee break’ initiative, as part of our second wave of customized WebEx training,” notes Fabiani. “The idea is to set aside 30 minutes each day for employees to ask any questions about their everyday use of WebEx. It’s a very intuitive service, but training needs to be recurring, to ensure that this service is kept firmly at the top of mind until it becomes instinct.” To support this training push, WebEx has linked the division extranet with the WebEx support web pages, providing a permanently accessible guidance resource.

Koenders admits “Within Toshiba I am an early adopter of WebEx, and as such, I am part of a core of WebEx ‘power users,’ it is like second nature to me now. It’s a little like switching from using a calendar book to using a PDA. It’s tentative at first but pretty soon you wonder how you ever worked without it.” Koenders hopes to see the time saving benefits of WebEx permeate the Sales and Training groups of Toshiba, as well as Marketing.

Once WebEx usage has reached professional levels across the whole of Computer Systems, there is every possibility that the adjustment of the business model made by the Marketing department will serve as an example for other divisions of Toshiba, of the importance of having a choice when to meet, and when to communicate virtually.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Toshiba chose to implement WebEx as much for the total service experience—including the post-sale training—as for the solution itself.
- By using WebEx, the company cut travel costs by 75% and increased employee productivity by 25%
- Toshiba’s second wave of adoption activities includes a WebEx ‘open coffee break’ initiative, giving employees a daily forum to learn more about WebEx.

¹ Distance vs. local travel. Distance travel includes airfare and accommodation costs for travel to a location in another region. Local travel excludes airfare.