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—Keith Macksey, Leadership Development Manager

The Pantry creates, delivers, and stores high-impact training materials with WebEx.



INDUSTRY

Retail

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

WebEx Training Center, Presentation Studio, Network-Based Recording

SUMMARY

The Pantry needed a training and collaboration solution that would enable cost-effective education for busy employees across an 11-state area. Using WebEx Training Center, The Pantry now delivers timely, high-impact course materials that employees can access online at anytime. In just four months, The Pantry has reduced information dissemination timelines from months to days and has seen improved collaboration between remote employees, ensuring greater buy-in on key projects.

ABOUT THE PANTRY

- **Line of Business**
Convenience store operation
- **Headquarters**
Sanford, NC
- **Number of Employees**
14,000
- **Target Market**
Consumers
- **WebEx Customer Since 2007**

The Pantry is the largest independently owned convenience store chain in the Southeastern United States and continues to grow through aggressive acquisition. As of February 2008, the company operates over 1655 stores in 11 states, primarily under its Kangaroo Express® operating banner. The Pantry provides consumers with a broad selection of name-brand and private-label beverages, snacks, fast food, tobacco products, gasoline, and more.

The Challenge

“When you have a footprint as large as ours, keeping everyone on the same page is a constant challenge,” observes Keith Macksey, Leadership Development Manager at The Pantry. “We needed to find a cost-effective way to overcome time and distance.” Historically, the company had delivered management training and development through periodic intensive meetings at remote locations. As a result, new policies and materials sometimes remained undistributed for months. Managers lost significant work time. And with so much information being presented at each meeting, many employees were unable to digest and retain it all. Further, because of the ad hoc nature of the company’s training and business development processes, managers in the field sometimes felt that they had no voice in the development of new policies and materials, and the company did not always achieve the desired buy-in from team members on new projects. The Pantry therefore needed a training and collaboration solution that would give employees convenient access to crucial training materials and promote dynamic collaboration between key stakeholders.

The Solution

An early adopter of WebEx at a previous company, Macksey was already familiar with the powerful features and flexible framework of the WebEx platform. After consulting with The Pantry’s Information Services team, he determined that WebEx Training Center was the right choice this time around as well. “WebEx provides the functionality, ease of use, and customer support that we were looking for,” explains Macksey. “I saw no need to take chances with anything else.”

With WebEx Training Center, Macksey now delivers high-impact courses on individual topics, a sharp contrast to the overly long training sessions of the past. Each course can be updated, delivered, and accessed as needed, accommodating the changing needs of the company as well as the busy schedules of its employees. Interactive features such as the whiteboard, chat, and polling functions are used to engage and maintain the interest of attendees, and surveys after each course provide feedback for Macksey and his team. Registration is required for both live and recorded presentations, enabling Macksey to track participation and adjust course schedules to meet demand.

WebEx has made it easy for The Pantry to create, save, and store training materials. Macksey uses WebEx Presentation Studio to build a pre-packaged course within a matter of hours, then posts the course to a co-branded WebEx Portal on The Pantry’s intranet, providing employees with anytime access to the training materials they need.

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—Keith Macksey, Leadership Development Manager



He uses WebEx Network-Based Recording to record live meetings, ensuring that all employees can receive training regardless of each person's busy schedule. "Anyone who's missed a course, or wants a refresher, can visit the WebEx portal and access the materials by simply clicking a link," explains Macksey. "By making the training as convenient as possible, we're really reaching out to our employees in a positive way, and they appreciate that."

The Benefits

In the short time since launching WebEx, The Pantry has already seen a dramatic reduction in the amount of time needed to disseminate information throughout the field. Training and implementation timelines that once took months have been reduced to days. And because participants can choose sessions that best fit into their schedules, The Pantry is seeing upwards of 80 percent participation in training programs.

Macksey finds the interactive tools in WebEx Training Center helpful in maintaining participant interest and enhancing the long-term effectiveness of each session.

The ability to draw on slides, underline words, and highlight key concepts in real time enables him to entertain and engage his audience. "The more I use the interactive tools available in WebEx, the better the learning experience," Macksey says. "For instance, using the polling function mid-session, I'm able to post test questions and find out how attendees are processing and retaining all the information we're giving them."

WebEx Training Center played a particularly crucial role during The Pantry's recent re-development of its training program for store managers and district supervisors. By using WebEx to share information with employees throughout the instructional design process, The Pantry has achieved company-wide collaboration on the project. Geographically distributed managers now have earlier access to information and can provide timely feedback on materials and policy changes, ensuring that the company achieves widespread buy-in of the final course content. "WebEx not only enables us to save time and money on airfare, but it also allows us to improve collaboration within the company," Macksey explains. "We can get more people involved in the process when making big organizational changes. We're co-creating materials with employees. That's the kind of interaction WebEx makes possible."

The Future

Though WebEx Training Center was launched solely for training purposes, word is spreading throughout The Pantry about the power of the WebEx solution. And as word spreads, more departments are implementing their own WebEx-enabled initiatives. "WebEx has already changed our corporate culture," says Macksey. "Employees are learning powerful new ways to collaborate internally and externally, as well as distribute and access information. If it's about people working together on a project across large distances, WebEx is the way to do it."

HIGHLIGHTS

- **WebEx makes it easy for The Pantry to create, save, and store training materials, enabling the company to develop a library of materials available for anytime access.**
- **WebEx improves collaboration between geographically distributed employees, resulting in greater buy-in on large-scale projects.**
- **The interactivity and flexibility provided by WebEx results in greater participation, improved information retention, and increased participant engagement.**