

## Global HR Firm Reaches Remote Clients with Web-Based Coaching

### Executive Summary

#### Customer Name:

BPI Group

#### Industry:

Human resources and organizational development

#### Location:

Chicago (North American headquarters), Paris (global headquarters)

#### Number of Employees:

2000

#### Challenge:

- Provide one-on-one career coaching services to clients in remote areas
- Supplement individualized coaching with regularly scheduled webinars
- Improve internal collaboration among BPI global offices and partners

#### Solution:

- Video-enhanced online training lets BPI coaches conduct one-on-one sessions with remote clients
- Interactive features enable coaches to provide immersive learning
- Regularly scheduled webcasts enable coaches to cover more ground in individual training sessions

#### Results:

- Helped BPI Group grow by 30 percent, driving one-third of that increase through remote coaching
- Six percent of BPI Group's 2009 gross income came from WebEx-delivered coaching services
- Spurred internal collaboration among global participants with document- and desktop-sharing tools

BPI Group sees revenues soar, attributes third of 30 percent increase to web-based coaching.

### Challenge

As one of the three largest human resources consulting firms in the world, the BPI Group built its reputation on providing high-touch, high-engagement "shared success" professional coaching. Its primary customers are mid-size to large organizations willing to invest in the acquisition, development, retention, and redeployment of talent. With international headquarters in Paris and a global presence that encompasses 38 countries scattered across several continents, BPI is a relative newcomer to the American market, having established its North American headquarters in Chicago in 2007.

Determined to build its U.S. presence by providing the same individualized career counseling services that have distinguished the company internationally, the BPI Group was at first limited by its relatively small North American workforce. With just 100 of its 2000 employees located in the United States, the firm simply could not reach all of its prospective clients or even some of its current ones.

"If we didn't have an office or a coach in the location where our services were required, we had to refer the business elsewhere," says BPI Group senior consultant Chris Osborn, who works out of the firm's St. Louis office. "We were watching revenue walk out the door." Making matters worse, there was no way the BPI Group could guarantee the quality of work it referred elsewhere, which meant that it not only lost revenue but risked undermining its fledgling U.S. branding efforts every time it handed off a job to another firm. For a company intent on strengthening its American presence, this simply was not acceptable.

### Solution

For Osborn and the BPI Group, the situation became critical when one of the company's clients had employees that BPI could not reach with its traditional one-on-one, face-to-face coaching services. "There were two people who wouldn't have gotten services," says Osborn. "One was in the upper peninsula of Michigan, and the other was in rural Louisiana. Because of their locations, these people would have gotten no help in their career counseling, none. We didn't have a partner we could refer them to, and we didn't have coaches in the area."

Charged with finding a way to reach these remote clients and others like them, Osborn immediately began looking into web-based solutions. Although he evaluated a number of products, he kept coming back to Cisco WebEx™. The reason was its ease of use. According to Osborn, all of the other tools required extensive downloads or Java programming. "In contrast," he says, "WebEx was very straightforward. It provided an easy and intuitive way to get into web-enabled coaching."

It did not hurt that the WebEx software-as-a-service (SaaS) model made life much easier for BPI Group's IT department. "BPI is still a fairly lean operation in the United States, so we don't have a huge IT presence," says Osborn. "The last thing I wanted was to make a lot of work for them in



building out server capacity, troubleshooting software, and so on. With a hosted solution such as WebEx, those issues are no longer our problem. That took an enormous burden off of our IT staff.”

After thoroughly testing and tuning the blend of Cisco® WebEx technology and BPI-developed curriculum, BPI Group began deploying WebEx Training Center in the summer of 2008. “By November 2008, we had been working with WebEx Training Center on a daily basis with clients throughout the United States, and we’d proven that we could retain revenue and deliver content effectively,” says Osborn. “By January 2009, our usage of the product really exploded.” By the end of 2009, between 700 and 800 BPI clients were attending WebEx meetings each month, and the number of BPI coaches using WebEx had grown from three or four in Chicago to 35 or 40 across the organization.

Today, the consulting firm uses WebEx Training Center for a range of functions, including some Osborn did not anticipate. For example, in addition to providing remote one-on-one coaching and an extensive selection of webcasts via WebEx Training Center, BPI Group’s U.S. employees are also employing it to collaborate with Paris software developers to create web-based search management tools. “I hadn’t anticipated WebEx’s value as a tool for internal collaboration,” says Osborn, “but we’ve been using it extensively for that purpose. Sharing and working on storyboards together in a WebEx-enabled session save an incredible amount of time and aggravation over a transcontinental phone conversation or emailing huge documents back and forth.”

**“I don’t think we’ve ever made a smarter investment to support our business. WebEx-enabled remote coaching is allowing us to increase our reach and scope while maintaining the quality of our services.”**

**— Chris Osborn, senior consultant, BPI Group**

## Results

According to Osborn, the BPI Group experienced year-on-year growth of 30 percent in 2008 and 2009, one-third of which can be directly attributed to clients retained because of the remote delivery capabilities facilitated by WebEx. In fact, the company attributes six percent of its gross revenue for that period to online coaching services. The company has also watched usage soar from 10,000 minutes per month at the beginning of 2009 to more than 40,000 minutes per month by the end of the year. Most remarkable of all, BPI has achieved those results without promoting the solution. “The growth of our WebEx usage has been organic,” says Osborn. “It’s just naturally evolved across our organization.”

Implementing WebEx has simply transformed the way that BPI Group does business. “WebEx has changed everything I do,” Osborn says. “I can’t imagine doing my job today without these tools. For instance, if I’m running a training session on how to use social media, I’m able to take a group of clients inside a social media application and show them how it works. It takes the mystery out of social media and makes it accessible to people who might otherwise not use it in their job search.”

Webcasts have also allowed the company to offer more content to clients. “In the past, a client working with us for three months would have 12 individual coaching sessions,” says Osborn. “Today, that client has the same number of face-to-face sessions but also has access to more than 60 webcasts.”

Thanks to the immediacy and interactivity of video, online coaching sessions have become so popular that some of BPI Group’s local Chicago clients choose to participate via WebEx rather than

drive to BPI's office. Combine this with the reduced travel on the part of BPI coaches, and the productivity gains are enormous, according to Osborn. "I don't think we've ever made a smarter investment to support our business," he says. "WebEx-enabled remote coaching is allowing us to increase our reach and scope while maintaining the quality of our services."

## Next Steps

WebEx has become such an integral part of the BPI Group's services that Osborn cannot quite imagine life without it. "WebEx has very quickly become part of who we are," says Osborn. "It's firmly ingrained in our business model." As such, the company has big plans for its future use. The first order of business, according to Osborn, is to increase WebEx adoption internally as the company opens more U.S. offices. Beyond that, Osborn cites a "big, big push" to employ WebEx to initiate a social media-based marketing program.

## For More Information

To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/web/products/webex/index.html>.

## Product List

WebEx Training Center



**Americas Headquarters**  
Cisco Systems, Inc.  
San Jose, CA

**Asia Pacific Headquarters**  
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.  
Singapore

**Europe Headquarters**  
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