

Eye Care Software Provider Sees Training Surge

Eyefinity/OfficeMate increases customer training significantly with WebEx online solutions.

Executive Summary

Customer Name:

Eyefinity/OfficeMate

Industry:

Eye care business software and web-based solutions

Location:

Rancho Cordova, CA

Number of Employees:

180

Challenge:

- Deliver superior product training and support without requiring customer or employee travel
- Encourage bonding and collaboration among geographically dispersed employees
- Reduce client cost of attending annual offsite user's group meeting

Solution:

- Remote training allows company to provide continuous and updated instruction on key topics
- Web conferencing provides alternative to costly travel associated with user group events
- Rich collaboration features allow team members to bond during virtual coffee breaks

Results:

- Increased number of weekly training sessions ten-fold over five-year period and participation in annual users conference by 1900 percent
- Increased clients trained per month from 50 in 2005 to more than 800 in 2010
- Contributed to company placing 20th in Training magazine's 2010 top company rankings

Challenge

With offices in four states and a team of eye care professionals scattered throughout the country, Eyefinity/OfficeMate casts a wide net in assembling the expertise that it relies on to deliver its software web-based solutions for eye care providers. Over the years, Eyefinity/OfficeMate has grown to become the leading provider of software and web-based solutions for the eye care industry.

In 2010, approximately 45 percent of computerized eye care businesses in the country are using OfficeMate software for practice management and electronic medical records. With OfficeMate users even more geographically dispersed than the company's employees, most of the training originally took place on the phone. According to implementation trainer Marsha Vaughn, this entailed at least two hours of talking the client through setup and use. "I wasn't here when the WebEx software was initially deployed," says Vaughn, "but I can't even imagine how laborious it must have been to teach the software without being able to demonstrate it on screen. Not surprisingly, our clients relied very heavily on their printed user manuals."

Understanding that this training approach was unlikely to be successful in the 21st century, the company began looking for innovative means to provide high-quality, cost-effective product training. With a Cisco® network infrastructure already in place, Cisco WebEx™ technology was a logical place to begin the search.

Solution

The rich collaboration features and ease of use afforded by WebEx® technology soon convinced the Eyefinity/OfficeMate team that it was the best solution for the company. "We needed to be able to share applications, whiteboards, and desktops, as well as transfer files back and forth for post-training tasks," says Eyefinity/OfficeMate director of education Rebecca Johnson. "WebEx technology made it easy to do all of that."

WebEx technology also made it simple for Eyefinity/OfficeMate to get used to the new format of instruction. "One of our biggest initial concerns was how well our customers were going to adapt to using a web-based tool for software training," says Johnson. "With WebEx technology, that concern evaporated almost instantly. Our customers were able to successfully log in to the instructor-led classes."

Three years after its initial deployment, WebEx technology had become firmly entrenched within Eyefinity/OfficeMate as a training and meeting solution. However, the company's customer support department was using a different tool to provide remote support to customers. Realizing that the company needed to standardize on a single solution for all of its remote training, meeting, and support functions, Vaughn began a campaign to convince the support staff to adopt WebEx solutions. "I knew I couldn't reach clients in the same way with the tool the support team was using," says Vaughn. "I had no choice but to convince them that WebEx technology would be able to meet their needs as well. I succeeded and haven't heard a word of complaint since the support team deployed the technology."

Back in 2005, Eyefinity/OfficeMate was holding between 20 and 25 WebEx-enabled training sessions a week. Five years later, the company now conducts more than 200 online classes per week and trains upwards of 800 clients a month. The breadth and quality of its training have also increased substantially, with innovative web seminars being offered regularly on important topics for the industry. One popular program even enlisted eye doctors to provide lunchtime e-learning sessions, enabling colleagues to follow along as the doctors used Eyefinity/OfficeMate to document their own cases. Says Johnson, “Our doctors love it, because they can log on and eat their lunch from the comfort of their desks, while virtually looking over another doctor’s shoulders as he or she provides tips and tricks for using our software.”

WebEx technology is also a powerful tool for internal use at Eyefinity/OfficeMate. No one knows this better than Johnson, who from her home office in the mountains of North Carolina manages a group that includes members in eight states and Canada, many of whom also work from home. “To maintain a top-quality team, we need to stay bonded and in constant communication,” she says. “WebEx software enables that. We conduct all of our meetings using WebEx technology. We even use it to hold virtual coffee breaks. By using the technology to share not just our work lives but also our personal ones, everyone on the team becomes more connected. And that definitely helps our work.”

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Rebecca Johnson, director of education, Eyefinity/OfficeMate

Results

Eight years into its WebEx implementation, Eyefinity/OfficeMate has realized numerous benefits from the web-conferencing software. Never have those benefits been more evident than after the company’s first-ever virtual user group meeting in 2009. When Eyefinity/OfficeMate decided to transform its annual users’ group meeting from an offsite event to an online one, Johnson turned to WebEx software to make that vision a reality. Offering 24 classes and six vendor demonstrations over a five-day period, Eyefinity/OfficeMate saw attendance increase 1900 percent over the previous year’s offsite meeting in Newport Beach, California.

This huge increase in client participation may seem surprising, but it is not, given the comparative cost of the events for customers: US\$129 in registration fees for sending an unlimited number of employees to the virtual conference versus \$14,500 in estimated travel costs for sending just 10 employees to the Newport Beach meeting. Add to that the tens of thousands of dollars in travel costs that Eyefinity/OfficeMate saved on its own employees and the overwhelmingly positive response received from attendees, and it is easy to see why Eyefinity/OfficeMate has made the virtual user group meeting an annual event.

The successful use of WebEx even contributed to VSP Global, Eyefinity/OfficeMate’s parent company, achieving a top 20 ranking on Training Magazine’s 2010 Top 125 list, which honors companies that provide the best in training and education programs for employers, clients, and other stakeholders. VSP jumped a whopping 77 spots from its previous ranking into the coveted top 20 bracket, marking a notable achievement for the company.

WebEx technology has also increased productivity in ways that Eyefinity/OfficeMate did not anticipate. For example, implementation trainer Vaughn had not even considered the possibility of online registration. Thus, the discovery that the WebEx solution facilitated web-based registration was doubly exciting. “When we realized clients could register themselves, we were thrilled,” she says. “This one feature made a huge difference. Online registration saved staff time by eliminating faxing and mailing, and it made it much easier for me to track registration and attendance numbers.”

For Eyefinity/OfficeMate, the bottom line is simple. Without the remote training and support capabilities that WebEx technology provides, the company would not be able to deliver its solutions at a competitive price. “Today, our software is so feature-rich it extends to every area of an eye care practice,” says Johnson. “Without web-based instruction, our implementation team would have to provide a minimum of a week’s onsite training for each customer installation. And those costs would have to be tacked on to the price of the software. We simply couldn’t maintain a market leadership position if the price of our software reflected those costs.”

Next Steps

Having already witnessed the power of WebEx technology for both external and internal uses, Johnson sees no end to the unique training and collaboration opportunities that it can afford. “In the future I think we’ll turn increasingly to videoconferencing to provide innovative training options,” she says. “Our goal is to help eye care professionals streamline their practices and make the most efficient use of our software and desktop solutions. WebEx technology will continue to be key to that effort.”

For More Information

- To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/webex>
- To read other success stories, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/webexcasestudies>
- To provide feedback or participate in the WebEx customer reference program, email: real.results@webex.com

Product List

Online Collaboration

- WebEx Training Center
- WebEx Meeting Center
- WebEx Event Center
- WebEx Support Center



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