

Improving Corporate Reach

Go from fragmented to unified through the magic of
Web conferencing solutions.



ENERGIZE YOUR CONNECTIONS™





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Executive Summary

Finding a means to reach that fringe franchisee owner can be a difficult challenge for many organizations. Companies that rely on a network of independent business owners and agents to sell and deliver the products and services to consumers are often faced with the challenge of how to effectively communicate with those business owners or agents. Corporations that utilize franchises or agents, such as retail, fast food, and the insurance industry, invest a lot of money and human hours trying to deliver marketing and sales plans, product information, and training to franchisee owners and agents. In many cases, the information never reaches the entire audience those business owners and agents who are considered be on the fringe, are left out and eventually fall short of their targets. Through the use of web conferencing, however, companies can reduce travel and human hour expenses and more importantly, extend their communication reach to that fringe business owner.

Communication Challenges

Take a look around and you will find plenty organizations that have communication challenges. Often companies struggle to find ways to deliver information to their employees, clients, and their vendors. Keeping internal employees up to date with information is challenging enough. Throw in a distribution network of people who are not direct employees, but rather a series of independent agents and business owners and you have a real task on your hands. Some of the difficulties companies will face are:

- > Geographically disperse groups of people.
- > Difficult to travel to deliver information in person.
- > Time scheduling conflicts to organize meetings.
- > People are busy and trying to find a time when everyone is willing to meet is a challenge.
- > Delivering multiple types of content such as audio and visual content.
- > How to transmit both audio and visual content
- > Communicating using various types of equipment.
- > Not everyone owns the same type of computers and telephones, nor do they have the same type of network connectivity

The company in the following case study recently faced many of these challenges. Company XYZ represents the name of a major tool manufacturer that utilizes a distribution network of a series of independently owned franchisees to deliver their products to the market. The issues they experienced and resolved are similar to those of any company that uses a franchisee or independently owned distribution network or agent model.



Case Study: Problem

In order to deliver their products to the market place, Company XYZ deploys a series of trucks that drive around from business to business selling and delivering tools. Each one of these tool trucks is owned, managed and operated by an independent franchisee owner. The corporate sales force for Company XYZ consists of a number of sales managers that oversee a group of franchises in a given geographic territory. In order to grow sales the sales managers would hold regular meetings with the franchisee owners to deliver training, introduce new products, and provide information of upcoming promotions. These meetings were typically held at locations that were central to the region and they were held on weekends as to not interrupt the week day sales cycle that occurs during typical business hours. Since these meetings were on weekends, it was difficult to get attendance as only the most aggressive franchisee owners would give up the precious time and travel the distance to show up. Company XYZ was spending quite a bit of money and - more importantly - spending time to reach a limited number of franchisees.

The corporate sales management team for Company XYZ eventually grew weary of working 7 day weeks and spending the time and money to travel to these remote locations only to get a limited turnout. Instead, they investigated using web conferencing tools to host these regular sales meetings virtually rather than live and in person. By utilizing web conferencing, Company XYZ was able to reduce their travel costs, and they could now schedule the meetings during the week since they no longer had to be concerned about pulling their franchise owners out of the field to travel to some remote location to meet in person. They just had to be somewhere with internet access to join. No more working on weekends for the Company XYZ corporate sales managers. As an added bonus, the sales managers were able to extend their reach to the fringe franchisee owner since the meetings were now much more accessible to them.

There were many issues that Company XYZ had to overcome when choosing the right web collaboration tool. One of the most prominent issues was getting everyone to connect to the web meeting. Each of the franchise owners is an independent business. As an independent business, each of the franchise owners chooses their own type of computers to use. Since Company XYZ corporate has no control over the type of computers their franchisees use nor do they control the software on them, they needed a web collaboration tool that was platform neutral and did not require any type of proprietary client install. The web tool also had to be simple to use and allow for easy entry into the web meetings. The sales managers that are hosting these meetings are not information technology specialists and cannot afford to spend any time trying to troubleshoot a user who is having difficulty trying to get connected. Fortunately, Premiere Global Services had a solution for Company XYZ via Adobe Connect Pro.



Case Study: Solution

Adobe Connect Pro is a Flash based tool with an intuitive interface that allows meeting organizers to deliver multimedia presentations to their constituents. This turned out to be the perfect tool for Company XYZ as Adobe Connect Pro offers incredible ease of entry. Adobe Connect Pro does not require a proprietary client in order to participate in a web meeting. All that is required is the Adobe Flash Player which is already installed on most computers since it is typically used to view many of the popular web pages on the internet. A participant can join an Adobe Connect Pro meeting using either a Mac or a PC with a Flash enabled web browser. The Flash based technology utilized by Adobe Connect Pro helped resolve another issue for Company XYZ.

One of the functions of the sales meetings was to introduce the franchisees to new products that Company XYZ was releasing to the market. During the live meetings, sales managers could hand out order forms to take orders from the franchisee. A franchise owner could see the new product and place an order for it right on the spot. This is a difficult task to try and pull off if you are hosting a meeting virtually over the web. To resolve this issue, Company XYZ had a custom Flash application developed for them. Since the application was written in Flash, it could be run from within the Adobe Connect Pro meeting room. The custom application provides the meeting attendees with a simple order form where the franchisees can select an item and indicate how many they would like to purchase. This way the sales managers can show the

franchisees a new product during a web meeting and get an order from each of the meeting attendees as they are viewing the product. traditional mail. Your teams can share content instantly, 24 hours a day, as often as the project demands. Marketing and corporate presentations can be supplemented with interactive and interesting multimedia. Not only can the CEO speak to his or her slides, but attendees will be able to see his or her expression and hand motions from anywhere in the world. Training sessions can break the monotonous slide-based presentation with video and audio clips which capture and retain the audience's attention.



Solution Summary

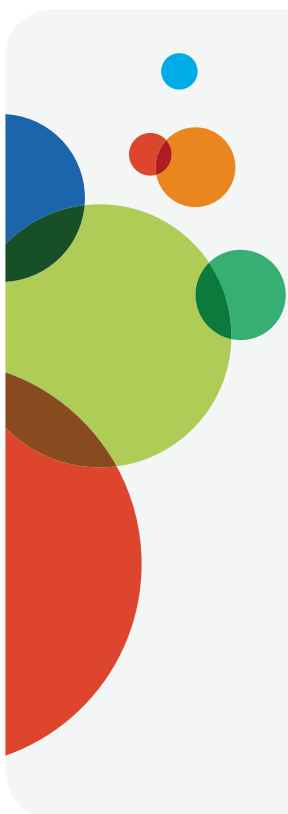
Before Company XYZ implemented the Adobe Connect solution, their organization relied heavily upon live, in-person sales meetings and faced many issues in communicating with their franchisees:

- > Geographically disperse
 - > Franchisees were located all throughout the various regions making it difficult to choose a centralized meeting place.
 - > People who lived and operated in the far corners of the region often did not attend due to the long commute to the sales meeting. Only the most aggressive owners would travel the distance to show up.
 - > Time
 - > Sales managers who worked for the corporate office would burn a lot of human-hours to travel and meet with the franchisees in person.
 - > Meetings had to be scheduled on nights and weekends in order to allow attendees time to travel to the selected locations.
 - > Money
 - > Sales managers accrued many expenses to travel to sometimes rent space for the meetings with their franchisees.
 - > The human-hours spent on travel had a financial cost as the sales managers were pulled away from other activities to drive revenue in order to meet with the franchisees in person.
 - > The fringe franchise owners who would not attend the meetings would typically have lower performance as they were not receiving all of the product education and appropriate sales training that occurred during the live events.
- > By electing to use a web conferencing tool, Company XYZ was able to greatly reduce the amount of time sales managers spent on the road, and reduce travel expenses. The week end meetings disappeared and the sales managers found more time available to focus on other revenue generation activities. The major gain was that the sales managers are now able to reach that fringe franchisee owner and improve productivity.
 - > Choosing a web tool provided Company XYZ with the following challenges:
 - > Various Types of Equipment
 - > Company XYZ could not control the type of computers the franchisees were using. So the tool had to be flexible enough to work on multiple computing platforms including both Mac and PC.
 - > Ease of Entry
 - > The web collaboration tool needed to allow for easy entry as the meeting hosts were not qualified nor did they have the time to spend troubleshooting software installs and meeting connection problems.
 - > Low Bandwidth Requirements
 - > Franchise owners were not always able to get to a location with a fast internet connection and would sometimes have to use wireless cell phone card or a slow DSL connection.
 - > Ability to share presentations as well as other multimedia content.
 - > In addition to sharing standard PowerPoint presentations, the corporate sales managers also wanted the ability to stream video for training.

Adobe Connect turned out to be the best solution for Company XYZ. The Flash based technology allowed for easy entry as most computers, both Mac and PC, already have the Adobe Flash player installed. In addition Flash does not require much bandwidth and is capable of delivering enriched multimedia content. As a bonus, Company XYZ was able to create a Flash based application to help streamline their ordering process during the online meetings.

Conclusion

Company XYZ is just an example of how a corporation can utilize web conferencing to communicate with their franchise owners. Many of these techniques can be used to help other similar markets such as fast food, retail, and insurance companies deliver corporate communications to their independent franchisees or agents. Web conferencing is not just a tool to reduce travel time. It also reduces the number of human hours required to meet and improves productivity. Most importantly, web collaboration tools can help corporations extend their communication reach to that fringe franchise owner or agent.



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About Us
The world collaborates with PGi. Our advanced meeting, conferencing and collaboration solutions energize people and organizations to connect more meaningfully and work together more productively. PGi is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia with operations in 24 countries worldwide.

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