

Executive Summary

Customer Name:

Barnardos

Industry:

Charity

Location:

Barking, Essex, England

Number of Employees

8000

Web Application

- Cisco WebEx Enterprise Edition

Cisco WebEx customer since

- October 2009

Summary:

- Barnardo's uses WebEx to deliver 50% of its IT training programmes
- WebEx lets trainers and staff cut travel time, saving money and boosting productivity.

Barnardo's uses WebEx Enterprise Edition to overhaul IT training and improve internal communications.

Background

Barnardo's is one of the UK's leading registered charities. It was founded by Thomas Barnardo in the late 1800s to protect and support children across the UK. Today, the charity works directly with over 110,000 children, young people and their families every year. It runs 394 vital projects across the UK to help some of the most vulnerable children and young people believe in themselves.

Barnardo's projects cover many important social issues; from family drug misuse to disability; from youth crime to mental health; from sexual abuse to domestic violence. Barnardo's believes that it can bring out the best in every child, and that all children deserve the chance to fulfil their potential.

Challenge

Barnardo's head office is based in Barkingside in Essex, but it also has nine regional offices across the UK, each of which takes on its own diverse set of local activities. Lisa Johnson, Information Services Learning and Development Manager, is responsible for training Barnardo's 8,000 employees and some volunteers in the company's IT systems and processes. With such a large number of employees spread across the country, it could be a time consuming task.

“Cisco WebEx is an integral part of how we work now. We can reach more people and complete more work in a shorter time, which is exactly what we need”

—Lisa Johnson, Information Services Learning & Development Manager, Barnardo's

Johnson explains: “My Information Services team consists of five people based around the country. Training the staff without any form of distance learning would mean a combination of classroom sessions and on-site visits, but that approach isn't particularly efficient.” She continues: “It would often be impossible to make a personal visit to a remote office and be back on the same day, or at least within working hours. We needed a solution that would be able to reduce our dependence on travel and allow us to reach more people in less time, while still being flexible and easy-to-use for non-technically minded staff.”

Solution

To reduce the pressure on the Information Services team, Barnardo's wanted to find a web conferencing solution with specific functionality to support distance learning. Having evaluated several tools, including Windows Live Meeting and Citrix GoToMeeting, it chose WebEx Enterprise Edition, having been introduced to the product by Cisilion, a Cisco partner who had previously provided a range of Cisco hardware to Barnardo's. In addition to offering specific tools for online meetings (Meeting Center) and online training sessions (Training Center), WebEx also provides an audio conference service (WebEx Audio) which could replace the company's existing conference call system. “With Meeting Center, Training Center and WebEx Audio together we can cover all our needs with just the one supplier, which is easier logistically,” says Johnson.

Other factors in the decision were ease-of-use and speed of implementation, since there was a timeframe of only a few months in which the system needed to be put in place. They also had to consider employees' needs. "Barnardo's staff are predominately social workers not IT experts, so we didn't want to intimidate them with an overly complex system," says Johnson. "The fact that WebEx runs over the web without a lengthy installation process meant that it could be integrated easily with our existing applications and that users could be up and running relatively quickly."

Environmental concerns were also a consideration. "Sustainability is key," says Johnson. "Barnardo's is committed to making efforts to be greener wherever we can, so the travel savings we can make from a system like WebEx are welcomed."

Results

The main beneficiary of WebEx is Barnardo's IT training. Johnson estimates that three years ago, 75% of its training sessions would have taken place in face-to-face classroom sessions, with 25% taking place on site. Now, with WebEx, she estimates that 50% takes place on WebEx, with the rest split evenly between classroom and on-site visits. "Classroom based training sessions require not just the trainer, but all relevant staff, to congregate in one place, meaning significant travel time," says Johnson. "With WebEx we can easily do as many as four online training sessions in a day, with no travel required."

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The system also means that new staff can be inducted more quickly when they join, no matter which region they are employed in. "Classroom sessions need to be booked in advance, and we'd often wait for a certain number of people to need them before scheduling," continues Johnson. "For a new joiner that could mean a week or more before being formally inducted and trained on basic IT processes. WebEx gives us the freedom to host those sessions remotely, whenever they are needed, enabling new recruits to get going much faster." This in itself can help to improve Barnardo's staff retention. "If you feel well supported by your employer and you feel that they are committed to your development, you're more likely to stay," says Johnson.

Ease of use, a key requirement at the procurement stage, has also been a benefit. "As with most new technologies, there can be some initial hesitation for first-time users as they don't know what to expect," says Johnson, who created a simple one-page guide on WebEx to help staff get to grips with the system. "Once they have experienced their first session, employees understand the benefits immediately."

In addition to training, WebEx Meeting Center has also been of use within Johnson's Information Services team. "We now use WebEx to catch up on a fortnightly basis, with a face-to-face meeting taking place every six to eight weeks," she explains. "It gives us the flexibility to hold regular catch-ups online with the entire team, rather than individual phone calls or meetings." Travel savings and efficiency gains, while not yet calculated, are expected to be significant, and the work-life balance of training staff has improved.

"On a personal level, when I originally started working with Barnardo's, I used to leave home

on a Sunday night, travel to head office or a particular region as required and return home on a Friday night,” says Johnson. “Advances in technology over the years and with the introduction of tools such as WebEx I can cut that travel time down significantly, which has had a huge impact on my working life.” Productivity is also boosted, since staff can focus time that would have been spent travelling on their work. “WebEx means fewer hours on the road and more in the office, so naturally we can achieve more,” she continues.

Next Steps

Johnson is currently putting together a deployment plan to communicate the benefits that have been realised so far to the rest of the business, and to put in place plans for further implementation. Online events are one particular area that she feels could be worth investigating. “It would be very interesting to use WebEx itself as a fundraising or marketing tool,” she says. Immediately though, Barnardo’s is focused on continuing the success of the IT training operation and further increasing staff efficiency. “WebEx is an integral part of how we work now,” continues Johnson. “We can reach more people and complete more work in a shorter time, which is exactly what we need.”



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