

Business School Hosts Web-Based Global Alumni Reunion

IESE Business School uses online tools to assemble international students and guests for a unique anniversary event.

Summary

Customer Name:

IESE Business School

Industry:

Higher education

Headquarters:

Barcelona, Madrid, Munich, and New York

Number of Employees:

502

Challenge:

- Host large online meeting for almost 3000 guests
- Support easy accessibility for international students
- Facilitate participation of worldwide business leaders

Results:

- Provided high-quality, global interactive event experience
- Achieved high event satisfaction rate with online participants
- Improved institutional relationships with current and former students

Solution:

- Online events accommodate large numbers of participants
- Application provides event management tools, including live comment moderation
- Web-based solution allows for easy worldwide access

Challenge

IESE (Instituto de Estudios Superiores de la Empresa) is one of the most innovative and pioneering business schools in the world. Offering courses for managers in Spain, Poland, China, Egypt, and other countries, IESE is currently the only business school that offers courses on four continents. The school also provides classes in coordination with associated business schools in Latin America, Portugal, Nigeria, the Philippines, and the United States, while employees can take IESE courses at international corporations such as Visteon, Henkel, Abbott, BBVA, Santander, Nestlé, and Ericsson. In total, the business school has more than 32,500 alumni located around the globe.

In 2007, IESE staff planned a number of events to celebrate the school's 50th anniversary, including a special global alumni reunion. For the event, IESE wanted alumni to be able to meet with colleagues and former teachers to discuss new business and financial trends. The CEOs of well-known national and international companies were also invited to participate as speakers.

IESE organises a substantial number of international face-to-face lectures as part of its educational programme. However, the school needed to find a new solution to put on the reunion that would allow staff to host almost 3000 guests, including a large community of international alumni and important guests invited from the business sector.

Results

By implementing Cisco WebEx™ solutions, IESE was able to host the first global alumni reunion in the history of the school. "Cisco WebEx absolutely helped IESE reach the objective that we had set out," says Itziar de Ros, MBA admissions director at the school. "The event exceeded IESE's expectations."

After measuring online and offline attendees' satisfaction level with the event, the feedback scored 4.56 out of 5. "We obtained very high marks from the students. People were really satisfied and the event was a real success," says de Ros. "Students were thanking us for having this event in the way that we had it. Although it was four o'clock in the morning in the U.S., it was worth it to get up to participate in this meeting online."

Based on the success of the global alumni reunion, IESE staff now use WebEx® to manage other events, a change that has led to improved communication with both current and former students. "It is gratifying to be close to our students," says Marisa Bombardó, associate director of the IESE alumni association. "One of our main priorities is building better relationships with our students, and WebEx has helped us achieve that aim."

Solution

Prior to selecting Cisco® WebEx, IESE had worked with Cisco on a number of different projects. Because WebEx can be used to host large online events, it was recommended as an ideal solution to meet the school's needs. "The global reunion was the first time that we developed an event of this size and caliber," says de Ros. "WebEx made it possible for us to connect students living in other countries and design an event where they could interact and enjoy the celebration."

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WebEx provided easy access to the event for international attendees with minimum technical requirements. Alumni and students also enjoyed the added benefit of being able to attend from home or their offices. "WebEx technology is easy use. The tool is very intuitive, and you immediately know how to run the program without any problem," de Ros says. "The technical requirements are easy to meet."

In addition, WebEx provided a large variety of tools to manage details before and after the event took place. Online attendees could ask questions or give comments during the reunion, a feature that helped ensure the event was as interactive as possible. "I was the moderator for the questions that students were asking during the event," says de Ros. "The whole celebration was broadcast on screens where attendees could read the comments from the chat. Everyone, from the 1200 online attendees to the people at the live event, could share comments and exchange thoughts."

Ultimately, WebEx allowed de Ros and her team to create an event that reached a large audience despite different computer platforms, multiple firewalls, and considerable distances that separated alumni, students, and guests. IESE was also able to reduce travel expenses and simplify meeting logistics for the event while allowing even more people to attend.

Next Steps

In the future, IESE expects to continue using WebEx to record classes and expand the number of students who can access class content online. “Every year we have over 300 educational lectures, and it’s a pity that only the 200 people who attend the class can enjoy the lecture,” says de Ros. “So we’re planning to use WebEx to offer class information to students even after a session is over. Our work with WebEx has been successful so far, and we look forward to continuing that success.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to www.webx.co.uk

Product List

Cisco WebEx