

Web Meetings Expand Access to Care for Remote Patients



With Cisco, DrEd creates patient confidence in online doctor consultations while providing convenience and security.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: DrEd
Industry: Healthcare
Location: London, United Kingdom
Number of Employees: 10 Employees

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Deliver personal, confidential doctor consultations online
- Help ensure patient privacy and data security
- Provide patients with easy-to-use videoconferencing capabilities for consultations with doctors

SOLUTION

- Cisco WebEx Meeting Center provides fast, secure, and convenient patient-physician consultations while maintaining patient privacy
- Cisco WebEx high-definition video fosters credibility, helps strengthen patient-doctor relationships
- Cisco WebEx offers easy-to-use platform for patient-doctor consultations and for physician-to-physician/specialist collaboration

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Expanded access to doctors for patients who may not have been able to see one otherwise
- High-definition video fosters credibility and strengthens patient-doctor relationships
- Capability to serve up to 100 patients daily with scalability to add more doctors and patients as business grows

Business Challenge

DrEd is a London-based online doctor service that helps enable patients to obtain medical consultations without needing to visit a doctor in person. Founded in 2010, the service provides patients in the UK, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland with convenient online access to experienced doctors who can help them manage their health from the privacy of their own homes.

“There are many people who are ill and suffering, but for various reasons never see a doctor. They may not have time, or have access to a local doctor, or are too embarrassed,” says David Meinertz, managing director at DrEd. “We want to make doctors more accessible to more people.” At the same time, the company sees the online-doctor model as a way to lower the cost of service while making the patient/doctor relationship more effective.

When the service was first launched, medical consultations were handled via online questionnaires. But patients soon wanted more. “Our patients started asking us for conversations in real time, including the ability to have face-to-face consultations using videoconferencing,” says Meinertz. The company quickly introduced telephone consultations as well as email-based services to its patients. However, before it could offer video-based web meetings, DrEd needed to find a service that could meet their stringent security requirements while delivering a superior video and audio

experience.

Solution

The timing for implementing video consultations was fortuitous. DrEd was planning an expansion into the German market and could introduce the full suite of consultation options as part of that launch. "This would be the first time a service of this kind would be available to patients in Germany, so we wanted to offer a full range of consultation services," says Meinertz.

The DrEd team researched videoconferencing providers, including free and paid services. The company found that only Cisco WebEx® Meeting Center could provide the data protection and security that DrEd needed to ensure patient confidentiality. "With Cisco WebEx Meeting Center, we can guarantee confidentiality of the doctor-patient conversation in web meetings, which creates confidence in using our online doctor services," says Meinertz.

One of the features that also swayed DrEd in its choice of Cisco® WebEx Meeting Center was the ease of scheduling and conducting a consultation using web meetings. For patients, they can schedule the consultation themselves and get an automatic confirmation email with the details from WebEx. "Because patients do not have to sign up for the service with a third party in order to participate in a web meeting, there is less hesitation to use it," says Dr. Sebastian Winckler, clinical lead for IT and general practice at DrEd, "It's very easy for patients to use WebEx meetings to consult with us face-to-face online."

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— David Meinertz, Managing Director, DrEd

Business Results

Today, DrEd serves as many as 100 patients per day across its full portfolio of online doctor services, including: online, email, phone, and web meetings. More than one-third of these patients are repeat patients. As part of its online offering, high-definition video helps DrEd establish credibility with patients and develop closer relationships. "It's very rewarding for us that our patients are embracing this model for care. I believe it helps me communicate more with my patients," says Winckler.

With access to web meetings from anywhere, on any device, both patients and doctors have maximum flexibility. This flexibility will help DrEd scale its services smoothly as it expands hours and locations for its doctors. "Conducting online consultations is a very appealing concept in general, because, as doctors, we can stay in touch with our patients better," says Winckler. "I believe that in the near future, online consultations will be routine."

DrEd is fulfilling its goal of reaching more people who need doctors, but are not able to visit one in person because no local doctor is available nearby or a doctor is too busy. "Our service has been extremely important for patients in areas where there are severe doctor shortages," says Meinertz. "Now all they need is Internet or mobile phone service to get access to one of our doctors."

Next Steps

After launching its service for Germany, DrEd is planning to continue expanding to other countries within Europe. It also plans to expand the types of conditions that it currently handles. For example, the high-definition video

capabilities of WebEx Meeting Center could act as a convenient platform for DrEd's teledermatology consultations.

The company believes the online service model is ideal for delivering cost-effective and convenient ongoing care and education for chronic conditions and health issues such as smoking cessation and diabetes. "We can reduce the cost of care for insurance companies for patients with chronic conditions," says Meinertz. "And offer more convenient, private consultations at the same time, which help patients remain vigilant in managing their conditions."

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco WebEx, visit:

<http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps10352/index.html>.

PRODUCT LIST

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