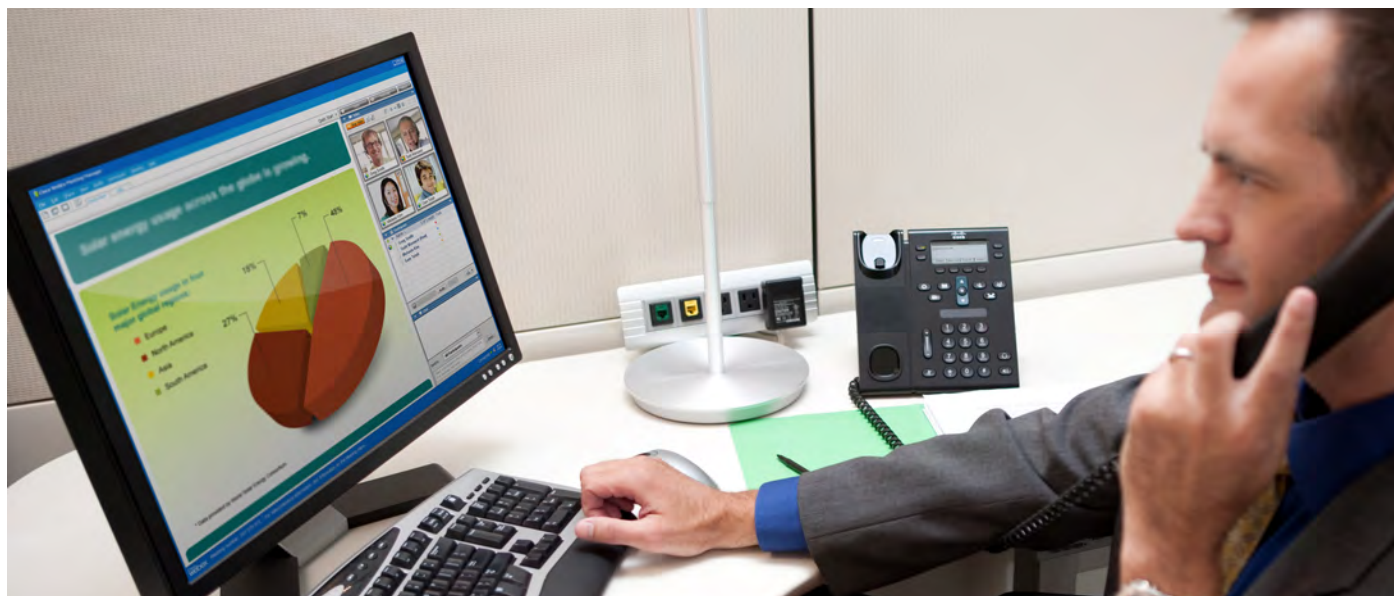


Global Organization Talks More Powerfully to its People

Customer Case Study



METRO PROPERTIES reaches out to managers and staff worldwide with Cisco WebEx Event Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: METRO PROPERTIES

Industry: Retail (Real Estate)

Location: Global, headquartered in Düsseldorf, Germany

Number of Employees: 1700

Challenge

- Foster open and inclusive approach to internal communication
- Use effective technology to support an open culture to bring direct communication to employees worldwide
- Deliver clear and consistent messages to a global audience in a timely and secure manner on multiple devices

Solution

- Cisco WebEx Event Center

Results

- Strong management commitment to consistency, reach, and accessibility
- Improvement in communication in corporate and divisional organizations, following direct example set by senior management
- High satisfaction ratings from participants

Challenge

METRO PROPERTIES manages the entire property assets owned by METRO GROUP. It combines the property activities of this largest German retail company, including METRO Cash & Carry, Real, Media Markt, Saturn and Galeria Kaufhof.

METRO GROUP possesses the most international wholesale and retail trade portfolio worldwide with 2200 retail locations in 33 countries across Europe and Asia. Expansion into a truly global operation (as far flung as China, Russia, Japan, and Vietnam) requires the use of new technology to stay in touch. Dr. Oliver Breiden, head of the program office at METRO PROPERTIES, says: "We felt the time was right to use the power of collaborative technologies to further improve internal communications."

Cisco WebEx® Event Center was used to bring international experts from topics on construction, facility management and real estate management closer together. In one such meeting, participants were asked to place their cursors on a map made available in the live virtual meeting room. This resulted in dozens of icons with names on them springing up all over the globe. "That really brought it home to people what it was like to be part of a worldwide virtual event," says Dr. Breiden. "Some even remarked that they saw the names of people they knew personally, increasing the feeling of closeness."

Another brainstorming session using Cisco WebEx Event Center had a virtual sheet of paper with empty spaces for thoughts. All countries were invited to suggest innovations, with the whole world watching as ideas were created. "It was very powerful, and a real eye-opener for everyone involved," says Dr. Breiden. "It was genuinely perceived as a workshop, not a one-sided presentation run by one person. Event Center actually allows you to work together as a team."



“Cisco WebEx Event Center has helped us improve the way we collaborate with our colleagues around the globe. It enables open and direct communication; both in terms of hierarchy and geography.”

Jean-Christophe Bretxa
CEO
METRO PROPERTIES

Cisco WebEx Event Center requires no new software and hardware, making it simple to implement and scale. It is delivered on demand over the Cisco Collaboration Cloud, a global high-performance network that uses a robust, multilayer security model including encryption. Supporting up to 3000 attendees in a single event, all engaged with high-quality video and rich multimedia content, Event Center was ideal for empowering management communications at METRO PROPERTIES.

“The technology is easy to use and runs smoothly on different platforms,” says Dr. Breiden. “Cisco WebEx Event Center is a great supplement to face-to-face meetings, teleconferencing, and email communication.”

Solution

After a number of expert meetings had been conducted, which were well received by participants, plans were made to use Cisco WebEx Event Center to also address METRO PROPERTIES staff worldwide, to provide an update on business results and the company’s long-term strategy.

One of the advantages of using Cisco WebEx Event Center is its commercial confidentiality. Access to the conference is password-protected, while the platform’s built-in security eliminates any chance of the content being intercepted. With no need to call on hard-pressed IT people to run Event Center sessions, the demand is both created and simultaneously satisfied by users themselves.

In a recent interactive Cisco WebEx Event Center session involving 60 managers worldwide, Dr. Breiden guided participants on how to interact by virtually raising their hands, and how to ask questions using the Q&A channel. Positive responses were upwards of 83 percent. “In an interactive session, it’s best to announce how questions will be handled in advance,” advises Dr. Breiden. “There are several approaches available, from pointing people at a Q&A channel beforehand to opening an FAQ response blog afterwards. Furthermore, it’s possible to record the session and subsequently distribute it to those who missed it.”

Results

When METRO PROPERTIES conducted the first expert sessions, only a few dozen people took part. Twelve months later, hundreds of colleagues are joining WebEx events in their home countries, using devices ranging from desktop PCs to wireless laptops and smartphones.

Feedback received on the different sessions has been very good. Asked to score the online event experience, ratings of excellent and good consistently exceed the 90 percent mark. The large majority of participants also confirmed that they would appreciate Cisco WebEx Event Center sessions being run regularly within the organization. More so, technical hurdles are low. As Dr. Breiden explains: “One of the standout statistics was that 80 percent of the participants rated the user friendliness as very easy or easy.”

Typical comments taken from the feedback forms from all over the world included:

- “Excellent approach to involve the management; high transparency and very clear expectation, priorities, and direction.”
- “This event is a very good, illustrative example of the new culture we want to shape: open and trustful cooperation as a team. Many thanks and let’s go ahead!”

When it comes to the support provided to organize and run online events, Dr. Breiden says: “Cisco really behaves like an entrepreneurial company. When I called the support number, they knew exactly who I was. There was no long menu to go through, and I was quickly answered locally by a human being. They promised to get back to me; and they did. It seriously felt like a small company that was willing to go the extra mile.”



“Cisco WebEx Event Center offers smart technology to extend the reach of our communication. It enables us to engage in open and direct exchange with our colleagues worldwide. Adoption is snowballing with queries coming in from different departments and countries.”

Dr. Oliver Breiden
Head of the Program Office
METRO PROPERTIES



In less than 12 months, usage within the METRO GROUP has already gone from around 3000 to 30,000 minutes. The notional benefits of significantly improved executive communications are matched by a greater awareness of key topics, reduced travel costs, and improved sustainability.

In a recent update session, Jean-Christophe Bretxa, the CEO of METRO PROPERTIES, felt very comfortable using Cisco WebEx Event Center to speak to the organization's staff on key developments and current topics. The session was run successfully and, again, underlined the company's open communication culture.

“Cisco WebEx Event Center has helped us improve the way we collaborate with our colleagues around the globe. It enables open and direct communication; both in terms of hierarchy and geography,” says Jean-Christophe Bretxa. “Needless to say it is a real advantage to convey key messages, offer training, and provide regular information updates in a direct and cost effective way to a worldwide community of colleagues.”

With METRO PROPERTIES moving to a new office in the near future, the need to stay connected with other METRO GROUP companies in other locations is also expected to rise. Future potential uses may also include the integration of Cisco WebEx Event Center with Cisco TelePresence® or the use of green-room technology to allow presenters to stand in front of a green screen and deliver messages weatherman-style.

“Cisco WebEx Event Center offers smart technology to extend the reach of our communication,” concludes Dr. Breiden. “It enables us to engage in open and direct exchange with our colleagues worldwide. Adoption is snowballing with queries coming in from different departments and countries.”

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco WebEx Event Center, please click here:
www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps10411/index.html

Product List

- Cisco WebEx Event Center



Americas Headquarters
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San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
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Singapore

Europe Headquarters
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