

Conference Organizer Multiplies Event Reach, Duration, and Impact

Fortune extended Brainstorm GREEN conference to online as well as in-person attendees with Cisco Collaboration Events experience.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fortune</i> Magazine • Publishing • New York, New York • 300 employees
CHALLENGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build community to brainstorm solutions for environmental sustainability • Increase <i>Fortune</i> brand recognition • Extend conference reach, duration, and revenue potential
SOLUTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a Cisco Collaboration for Events experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Shared live conference with virtual attendees using Cisco WebEx LiveStream ◦ Enabled virtual attendees to view and comment on content after conference with Cisco Show and Share, a video sharing application ◦ Engaged Cisco WebEx Advanced Services to manage virtual aspects of conference, mitigating risk at highly visible event
RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared conference content with 1700 virtual attendees in addition to 300 in-person attendees • Shared 1200 hours of video with 750 people in first 30 days following event • Prepared to create new revenue streams for future conferences

Challenge

Fortune, a global business magazine, produces executive conferences, attracting some of the world's most influential industry and government leaders. *Fortune* conferences produced in 2010 alone include *Fortune* Brainstorm GREEN, *Fortune* Brainstorm TECH, the *Fortune* Most Powerful Women's Summit, and *Fortune* Global Forum. "Fortune editors view our conferences as the forum to invite the world's smartest people to solve the world's biggest problems," says PJ Boatwright, vice president of conferences, *Fortune* magazine. "Our mission is to create a peer-to-peer experience for thought leadership and professional networking."

Traditionally, *Fortune* has limited its conferences to approximately 300 invitees, typically chief executives and top government leaders, who travel to the conference venue. But for the *Fortune* 2010 Brainstorm GREEN conference, conference organizers wanted to innovate by also including people from anywhere in the world who participate over the Internet, so-called virtual attendees. "Few topics are more important to businesses and individuals than environmental sustainability," says Andrew Judelson, chief marketing officer for *Sports Illustrated*. "We still wanted to invite a small group of the world's brightest people to attend the conference in person. And yet we also wanted to include the many other thought leaders on environmental sustainability, as well as people who work in the field, who often contribute the most innovative ideas."

Fortune conference organizers decided to create a hybrid conference, combining the small group of invited executives with a much larger group of people who would join from a desktop or laptop to view sessions and interact with speakers, other experts on environmental sustainability, and each other. To add the new virtual aspect to the conference, *Fortune* needed collaboration technology and services to:

- Include virtual attendees anywhere in the world, engaging them in interactive conversations
- Sustain the content and dialogue long after the three-day conference concluded
- Make it very easy for people to view real-time and archived video and to contribute to the discussion
- Avoid technology mishaps during a highly visible event with leading business executives and government leaders from around the world

“Using the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, we’re extending the duration of the Brainstorm GREEN conference from three days to a full year.”

— PJ Boatwright, Vice President of Conferences, *Fortune* Magazine

Solution

Fortune Brainstorm GREEN 2010 marked a milestone in the history of *Fortune* conferences by including online participants in addition to in-person attendees. To stage the virtual aspect of the conference, *Fortune* used the Cisco® Collaboration for Events experience, which includes solutions such as Cisco WebEx LiveStream, Cisco Show and Share, and Cisco WebEx™ Advanced Services. “Cisco provided the technology and the expert resources we needed to make our first online event a success,” says Boatwright. “We felt comfortable using the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, because Cisco itself relies on the same technology for its own events and meetings with employees, customers, and partners.”

The *Fortune* Brainstorm GREEN conference took place April 12-14, 2010, in Laguna Niguel, California, just three months after the organizers approached Cisco. For the first time ever at a *Fortune* conference, in-person attendees were joined by virtual participants from around the world, who could:

- Register to watch the sessions live, through Cisco WebEx LiveStream. Using a desktop or laptop with a broadband connection, virtual participants had the opportunity to experience every moment of all 26 keynote sessions, as well as interviews conducted by *Fortune* editors.
- Interact with panelists and submit questions. A moderator interspersed questions from the virtual audience with questions from in-person attendees.
- Submit questions to *Fortune* editors and additional global experts who also attended remotely. The conference organizers recruited these experts specifically to participate in the Cisco WebEx LiveStream sessions.
- Interact with other participants during the video sessions, using the text chat feature in Cisco WebEx LiveStream. “Online participants in the Brainstorm GREEN conference actually received added value because they not only heard from our on-stage presenters, but also from *Fortune* editors, other experts, and other remote participants,” says Judelson.

Fortune Brainstorm GREEN 2010 also marks the first time that content for a *Fortune* conference will remain available for viewing and comment after the live conference ends. “When past conferences ended, the content lived on only in the minds of the attendees,” says Boatwright. “This year, with the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, we are sustaining the conversation by providing the videos in a licensed repository on Cisco Show and Share for 12 months.” People who attended the conference in person or online can sign in to Cisco Show and Share to search for videos by keyword and collaborate with other attendees by leaving comments.

Results

Expanded Audience

With the 300 in-person attendees joined by 1700 who joined online, the Brainstorm GREEN 2010 conference reached nearly seven times as many people as the same conference the year before, thanks to the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience for online participants. “Offering online sessions for Brainstorm GREEN extended the reach and impact of the conversation,” says Boatwright. “This conversation is so crucial for the future of our planet that it would have been wrong to confine it within the walls of the conference center.”

“As part of the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, Cisco WebEx Advanced Services advised us on how to use collaboration technologies to meet our business needs and financial goals. Their guidance enabled us to extend our brand, our content, and our conversation beyond the physical walls of the *Fortune* Brainstorm GREEN conference.”

— Andrew Judelson, Chief Marketing Officer, *Sports Illustrated*

Virtual participants in Brainstorm GREEN joined the conference for an average of 3.6 hours, a remarkably long time for virtual meetings, indicating that attendees perceived real value. What's more, online attendees participated actively, asking questions and sharing comments that enriched the discussion on environmental sustainability.

“To preserve the health of our planet, we need the best thinking of everybody, everywhere, who is interested and has ideas to share,” Boatwright says. “The Cisco Collaboration for Event experience enabled us to be inclusive while still maintaining the peer-to-peer experience for invitees.”

Extended Conversation

Just 30 days after the event, more than 750 people had already visited the Cisco Show and Share portal, watching 1200 hours of video and viewing the comments area 7800 times. Keeping the session content available benefitted online participants, because they could view and comment according to their own schedules. In-person attendees also appreciated the video-sharing application, because they knew that if they missed a live session, they could still participate after the conference ended.

“The Cisco Collaboration for Events experience has enabled us to extend the duration of the Brainstorm GREEN conference from three days to a full year,” says Boatwright. “We expect more and more people to visit the Cisco Show and Share portal as awareness spreads through word of mouth.”

New Revenue Opportunities

To remain profitable in a challenged economy, *Fortune* actively seeks new revenue streams, including new ways to maximize the return on investment from conferences. Conference organizers expect the hybrid conference format to lead to new forms of revenue. For example, *Fortune* is planning a subscription service to *Fortune* conferences. And the value of sponsorships may increase because of increased attendance. “This year's conference sponsors were thrilled that their products and services were exposed to 1700 additional people,” Judelson says.

“As part of the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, Cisco WebEx Advanced Services advised us on how to use collaboration technologies to meet our business needs and financial goals,” Judelson continues. “Their guidance has enabled us to extend our brand, our content, and our conversation beyond the physical walls of the *Fortune* Brainstorm GREEN conference.”

Next Steps

To build on the success of Brainstorm GREEN, *Fortune* plans to include the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience in future conferences. To include speakers who cannot travel, the conference organizers will use Cisco TelePresence technology. “Cisco TelePresence allows a remote speaker to interact with a live audience as if the speaker were physically present,” says Boatwright.

Boatwright concludes, “Based on the very positive Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, I can't imagine moving forward on future hybrid events without Cisco.”

PRODUCT LIST**Cisco Collaboration for Events**

- Cisco WebEx LiveStream
- Cisco Show and Share
- Cisco WebEx Advanced Services

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco Collaboration for Events experience, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration4events>.

To join conversations and share best practices about collaboration, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation>.



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

Cisco and the Cisco Logo are trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. A listing of Cisco's trademarks can be found at www.cisco.com/go/trademarks. Third party trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (1005R)