

Energy Company Triples Training Volume with Online Format

Origin Energy uses WebEx Training Center to improve availability and lower cost of employee training.

Executive Summary

Customer Name:

Origin Energy

Industry:

Energy

Location:

Adelaide, Australia

Number of Employees:

4000

Challenge:

- Deliver employee training across Australia and New Zealand more efficiently
- Improve access to training by making trainers more readily available
- Reduce travel costs related to training and interstate meetings

Solution:

- WebEx technology allows company to save estimated AUD\$60,000 in annual training costs
- Online training enables one full-time, one part-time person to provide training to 4000 employees
- Desktop-sharing in WebEx meetings enhances collaboration between remote employees

Results:

- Reduced travel costs by approximately 50 percent
- Provided greater flexibility in how to complete training, boosting employee satisfaction
- Tripled volume of employee training

Challenge

As Australasia's leading supplier of gas and electricity, Origin Energy generates power for more than 3 million customers in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. With a customer base of this magnitude, it is critical for all of the company's employees to fully understand corporate standards and processes to help ensure a smooth delivery of services. That's where Glenda Spencer, Oracle accounting training manager, comes in, as her role is to provide training to these approximately 4000 employees.

With just one part-time staff member, and an employee population spanning five Australian states, New Zealand, and Indonesia, her task was impossible to accomplish. "I was travelling at least a week, sometimes two, each month to deliver this training in person," says Spencer. "The logistics of coordinating flights, booking rooms, and arranging logins for these trips was bad enough, but then when you put all this effort into it and people don't show up, it made it all the more frustrating."

This in-person training model was also prohibiting employees from receiving the training that they needed, when they needed it. "Not everyone was able to wait weeks or months for me to fly out to their location," says Spencer. "So people would start using certain tools and applications without the appropriate training. We needed to find a way to improve access and availability of our training sessions in order to avoid potential problems."

Although the company recently developed an e-learning reference tool, employees often found the software too complicated. What it lacked was interactivity, a human element that would make learning more engaging for users.

Solution

Fortunately, Spencer had been in a similar situation in one of her previous roles. "I came across Cisco WebEx technology about 10 years ago when I was a training manager working for the airline industry," she says. "I thought it was a very effective tool, and I knew it was the only way to provide a timely training service for Origin Energy as well."

But first, Spencer would have to convince the company's management on the idea. Knowing that cost savings were an important consideration, she calculated the company's overall training costs and compared it with that of Cisco WebEx™ technology. "I was able to show them that we could save approximately \$60,000 in travel costs per year if we started using Cisco WebEx Training Center," says Spencer. "That immediately got them listening. And it wasn't hard to convince them afterwards."

Today, Origin Energy relies heavily on WebEx® technology to deliver training to its geographically scattered employee population. "From polling, annotation tools, to whiteboard sessions, WebEx Training Center really is the only solution that offers everything you need to conduct an effective

online training session,” says Spencer. The company’s e-learning materials are now being used as a supplement to this interactive training environment.

Spencer found that a step-by-step breakdown of each topic seems to work especially well with employees. And when addressing a group with different skill sets and learning methods, Cisco® WebEx technology allows them to provide individuals with more personalized service. “The scope of people we train is very diverse,” says Spencer. “Where an engineer might prefer looking at numbers and tables to learn applications visually, a call center rep will prefer a verbal explanation and more hands-on instruction. So having an online tool that allows us to switch training methodologies quickly and adapt to specific learning styles is extremely useful.”

Origin Energy’s WebEx usage does not stop at training; the company is also using Cisco WebEx Meeting Center to conduct interstate meetings. “Other departments are using WebEx technology to collaborate with remote colleagues and partners,” says Spencer. “They use the desktop-sharing feature to look at documents together and make comments remotely. It’s been a great productivity enhancer for everyone.”

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— Glenda Spencer, Oracle accounting training manager, Origin Energy

Results

In addition to reducing its travel budget by approximately 50 percent, the biggest impact WebEx technology has had on Origin Energy is the vast improvement in training availability. “Now instead of telling new users they have to wait until next week to receive training, I can have them join a session the following day,” says Spencer. “Plus, they have the option to complete an entire program or update their skills by participating in only the sessions they need to. I think everyone appreciates the flexibility we can now offer them.”

The company even has the data to prove that employees are satisfied. According to a recent survey Spencer conducted internally, 99 percent of employees stated they would recommend WebEx training to a colleague, while the majority also stated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the program. As a result, Origin Energy has been able to triple its training volume within just nine months of implementing WebEx Training Center. And this boost in training productivity can only mean one thing: that employees are better prepared when using new business tools and applications.

These benefits have had a trickle-down effect to other departments in the company, including IT. “Because we’re able to provide more effective training, we’ve seen a decrease in the number of help desk calls coming in asking how to use applications,” says Spencer. “WebEx has proven to me once again that it is truly a beneficial tool.”

Next Steps

Thoroughly satisfied with what she's been able to accomplish using WebEx Training Center, Spencer is now focused on achieving even more. "I'd like to increase the diversity of our courses by offering them in different formats and lengths, including pre-recorded training," says Spencer. "By creating a variety of sessions suited to different users, I'm hoping to further boost our training attendance.

For More Information

- To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/webex>.
- To read other case studies, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/webexcasestudies>.
- To provide feedback or participate in the WebEx customer reference program, email: real.results@webex.com.

Product List

- Cisco WebEx Training Center
- Cisco WebEx Meeting Center



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