

Government Office Transforms Communication with Web Meetings

Queensland Audit Office uses online tools to train staff remotely and improve onsite client communications.

Executive Summary

Customer Name:

Queensland Audit Office,
Queensland Government

Industry:

Public Sector

Location:

Queensland, Australia

Number of Employees

240

Challenge:

- Enable senior staff to mentor employees while decreasing travel to onsite client meetings
- Protect highly confidential financial data while reviewing audit information online
- Enhance collaboration and close working relationships with other government departments

Solution:

- Secure web-based solution protects sensitive data
- Video features provide face-to-face employee interaction
- Flexible online tools improve meeting efficiency

Results:

- Assisted in establishing new communication and professional development model
- Enhanced productivity of remote support for key business systems
- Accelerated development and uptake of shared audit methodology and systems across Australia

Challenge

As the external auditor for the Queensland Government, the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) is an independent, proactive organisation that is responsible for conducting annual audits of more than 800 public sector clients across the state, including government-owned corporations, local governments, and other entities. Through its reporting to the Queensland Parliament, the QAO also promotes government accountability and helps the public sector run more efficiently and transparently. For instance, the QAO is jointly leading the collaborative development and maintenance of an audit methodology system (IPSAM), which is currently implemented in four state audit offices.

Because the QAO relies on the experience and proficiency of its workforce to maintain its high auditing standards, quality assurance and professional development are extremely important priorities for the organisation's senior staff. As in many financial organisations, however, focusing on billable client work is also a top priority.

To enhance collaborative working relationships within the organisation, Ross Schamburg, IT director at the QAO, began searching for a web-conferencing solution that allowed senior staff to interact with clients in the field while continuing to help ensure quality assurance and devote time to staff development activities. Because the QAO also handles extremely sensitive financial data, the application needed to be highly secure as well. "We wanted to find a flexible tool that provided a secure but highly interactive environment that could help transition us to becoming an organisation where people are connected despite geographical boundaries," Schamburg says.

Solution

When Schamburg and his team began looking for a solution, they turned to NetStar, a Cisco® Unified Communications partner. NetStar recommended Cisco WebEx™ solutions based on their flexibility and strong security features. "The QAO works with confidential financial information, so IT security is always a concern when we adopt new technology," Schamburg says. "Other solutions we explored required content to be forwarded and stored on external servers. In contrast, we liked the fact that Cisco WebEx services are highly secure and remain private."

The QAO now uses Cisco WebEx Meeting Center for staff meetings and Cisco WebEx Training Center to teach employees how to use new software applications. "Cisco WebEx solutions are so intuitive that it's easy for anyone to use video, drawing, and annotation features to enhance the online experience," says Schamburg.

As more QAO employees experience Cisco WebEx meetings, Schamburg has seen the use of online conferencing grow both throughout the organisation and throughout audit offices in other states. “More and more of our staff are experiencing the benefits of online collaboration. We’re starting to change the way we work both internally and with clients using Cisco WebEx solutions,” says Schamburg.

“Cisco WebEx solutions help us move toward a collaborative model where the senior staff is more productive in addressing the needs of clients, maintaining quality assurance, and mentoring junior staff.”

– Ross Schamburg, IT director

Results

Since implementing Cisco WebEx technology, the QAO has introduced new ways for employees to collaborate, allowing senior staff to improve client communications while providing training and professional development to colleagues. “We’re making steady progress in giving our people the tools they need to work productively independent of their physical location,” says Schamburg. “Cisco WebEx solutions help us move toward a collaborative model where the senior staff is more productive in addressing the needs of clients, maintaining quality assurance, and mentoring junior staff.”

While senior staff at the QAO have used Cisco WebEx services to maintain close, collaborative working relationships as they travel more, other employees at the organisation are beginning to use the technology to reduce travel. “As QAO moves towards a more virtualised model, where people are connected to colleagues and clients regardless of location, Cisco WebEx solutions have started to save some of our staff a lot of valuable time in commuting to work and traveling to meetings,” Schamburg says.

In addition, the QAO uses WebEx technology for web-based staff events. These events allow employees to remain focused on their billable client projects while still participating in team-building and social interaction. Cisco WebEx solutions even enable remote support for key business systems, making it easier than ever for employees to connect and collaborate no matter their location.

Next Steps

“As our employees become more comfortable with collaborative meetings, they’re discovering more and more ways to use WebEx solutions,” says Schamburg. “The QAO is considering using WebEx solutions to produce web-based events, including regular client updates, online education sessions, and staff briefings. This technology is helping us develop a successful model for remote mentoring and collaboration.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to <http://www.cisco.com/web/products/webex/index.html>.

Product List

Cisco WebEx



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Singapore

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