

Insurer Improves Agent Training and Gains Competitive Advantage

AXA Seguros sees productivity soar after adopting WebEx tools to provide consistent agent training across all of Mexico.

Executive Summary

Customer Name:

AXA Seguros

Industry:

Insurance

Location:

Mexico City, D.F., Mexico

Number of Employees:

4000, plus 8000-member sales force

Challenge:

- Provide top-quality, ongoing training to 8000 agents scattered across Mexican Republic
- Reduce time and money lost to travel, while extending reach and improving instruction
- Increase collaboration to share best practices among employees and industry

Solution:

- Web tools enable insurer to provide consistent, up-to-date agent training regardless of location
- Online meetings allow business to continue when H1N1 virus keeps workers at home
- WebEx-facilitated training enables insurer to certify 1000 agents in three-year period

Results:

- Delivered same quality of training to agents in remote areas as those in big cities
- Reduced travel by 70 percent, while providing instruction to more agents
- Furthered company's Green Actions initiative by reducing travel and printing requirements

Challenge

When global financial protection firm AXA Group acquired Mexican insurer Seguros ING to form AXA Seguros, its plan for the new company was to expand aggressively within Mexico. To that end, it rapidly grew its sales force, dispatching more than 8000 agents to every corner of the country to sell life, car, medical, home, and damage insurance to citizens, corporations, and government organizations. With so many agents, AXA was challenged to keep pace with the training needs of its newly expanded sales team, many in very remote locations.

“Our sales agents need extensive training, and that training needs to be updated frequently,” says Carlos Islas Murguia, director of Mexico City’s AXA University, the branch of AXA responsible for providing that instruction. But with a sales force spread across more than 760,000 square miles, delivering this training to agents in their own locales or requiring them to travel to Mexico City for classes was not feasible. Not only were the logistics extremely complicated, the funds and human resources required for such an endeavor simply did not exist.

The company had already achieved great success using Cisco TelePresence™ technology to conduct executive presentations remotely. Impressed by the high-definition video and audio qualities of Cisco® TelePresence technology, in addition to its convenient collaborative tools, AXA Seguros tried addressing its agent training with videoconference sessions. Although these videoconferences made an instructor available to several locations simultaneously, they still needed to extend training to those who were not located near facilities equipped with TelePresence. “The problem remained that our agents in outlying areas were not receiving the same quantity or quality of training as those in big cities,” says Islas. “As a result, their sales suffered.”

AXA Seguros began a search for a user-friendly, web-based solution that would enable the company to provide distance learning to its widespread agent force, even in the most remote locations.

Solution

Islas and his team compiled a list of AXA Seguros’ requirements for a web-based training tool. These requirements included a software as a service (SaaS) delivery model, stellar connectivity, the ability to record events, a variety of collaboration features, integration of multiple media types, and ease of use. Cisco WebEx™ technology met all of the above requirements. What’s more, WebEx® technology could easily be integrated with the company’s existing Cisco network infrastructure. For Islas, the choice was simple. “WebEx Training Center provided the features we required and the flexibility to adapt to our growing needs. Plus, Cisco’s vision of using technology to extend reach, improve collaboration, and streamline processes aligns perfectly with AXA’s own vision.”

Rapid deployment and adoption were also key criteria. Cisco WebEx technology delivered both. With the help of WebEx consultants, AXA University quickly adapted its curriculum to the new platform and began offering courses online. The response was immediate and positive. “I was

amazed at how quickly agents with very little computer experience were able to start using WebEx,” says Islas.

Today, WebEx Training Center is a key component of an AXA University training program that includes more than 40 courses delivered over three years. At the end of this period, trainees receive an accreditation equivalent to a bachelor’s degree. In 2010, the first 1000 agents received their certification from the WebEx-enabled program.

For Islas, though, it is not just about the number of agents reached; it is also about the quality of the curriculum that AXA University is able to provide. WebEx tools have increased this exponentially. “With WebEx, we can provide a much more robust training program,” says Islas. “For example, we’re starting to make short films of our best agents in action offering tips to colleagues. These are then offered on demand as part of our curriculum. Agents love this, and it affords us a new way of teaching best practices. From the high-quality videoconferencing provided by TelePresence to the rich distance learning opportunities afforded by WebEx software, our Cisco solutions are allowing us to collaborate in ways we could have never imagined prior to our adoption of these technologies.”

WebEx technology has also caught on internally at AXA Seguros, precipitated by the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic. “When the threat of an epidemic suddenly restricted travel and made it difficult for even local employees to come in to the office, company executives turned to WebEx technology to continue business,” says Islas. “When they were able to move their executive sessions and internal meetings online and collaborate as if they were in the same room, they immediately saw the power of the technology.” Since then, the use of WebEx technology has spread throughout the company. The human resources department employs WebEx tools to conduct face-to-face interviews with remote candidates. And even out-of-country suppliers are now able to meet with AXA executives remotely to demonstrate new technology and products.

“Since deploying WebEx Training Center, we’ve seen huge gains in productivity and communications. And those gains have come at a very low cost to AXA Seguros.”

—Carlos Islas Murguía, director, AXA University, Mexico City, AXA Seguros

Results

“When we made our case for adopting WebEx technology, we had to provide cold, hard numbers to convince management that the software would provide a rapid return on investment,” says Islas. “Today, those executives couldn’t be happier. Since deploying WebEx Training Center, we’ve seen huge gains in productivity and communications. And those gains have come at a very low cost to AXA Seguros.”

Reduced travel has contributed greatly to those gains. Since transferring the bulk of its training to the web, the company has decreased travel costs by 70 percent. And it has done so during a period in which 2000 agents were added to its sales force. “WebEx technology has given us a huge competitive advantage,” says Islas. “It puts us miles in front of other Mexican insurers in terms of the way we’re training agents and the professionalism those agents are able to demonstrate in the field. Better training translates to better sales, and our agents are experiencing both.”

WebEx technology also allows AXA Seguros to get closer to customers while still heeding the company's Green Actions initiative of reducing its carbon footprint and being mindful of the environment. "Our government and corporate customers love the fact that we can now share information with them instantly over the web," says Islas. "There's no more printing and distribution of massive documents and no more travel required to attend in-person meetings, which is a bonus for everyone."

For Islas, one particularly gratifying aspect of AXA Seguros' use of WebEx training tools has been the global reach that it has provided. Not only have AXA Seguros executives used WebEx technology to meet virtually with AXA Group colleagues in Europe, the United States, and Asia, but AXA Universities in other parts of the world have begun to recognize the success that Islas and team have achieved by deploying distance learning. "Both my colleagues at other AXA Universities and other insurance companies have noted the strides we've made in training since adopting WebEx technology," says Islas. "Now, they're actively seeking our advice. By sharing best practices with colleagues and companies around the globe, we strengthen our reputation within the industry."

Next Steps

Buoyed by their initial success with WebEx-enabled distance learning, Islas and his team are constantly exploring additional uses for the technology. One area that particularly excites Islas is using WebEx technology to deliver training to mobile devices such as smart phones and iPads. "Agents have a lot of downtime," says Islas. "If we can reach agents through their phones during times that they're waiting for customers or traveling between clients, we can maximize training opportunities and improve agent productivity. This is just one example of how WebEx technology has allowed us to think in completely different dimensions."

For More Information

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

Product List

- Cisco WebEx Solutions
- Cisco TelePresence™ Technology
- Cisco IP Telephony
- Cisco Switches and Routers



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.

CCDE, CCENT, Cisco Eos, Cisco Lumin, Cisco Nexus, Cisco StadiumVision, Cisco TelePresence, the Cisco logo, DCE, and Welcome to the Human Network are trademarks; Changing the Way We Work, Live, Play, and Learn and Cisco Store are service marks; and Access Registrar, Aironet, AsyncOS, Bringing the Meeting To You, Catalyst, CCDA, CCDP, CCIE, CCIP, CCNA, CCNP, CCSP, CCVP, Cisco, the Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert logo, Cisco IOS, Cisco Press, Cisco Systems, Cisco Systems Capital, the Cisco Systems logo, Cisco Unity, Collaboration Without Limitation, EtherFast, EtherSwitch, Event Center, Fast Step, Follow Me Browsing, FormShare, GigaDrive, HomeLink, Internet Quotient, IOS, iPhone, IQ Expertise, the IQ logo, IQ Net Readiness Scorecard, iQuick Study, IronPort, the IronPort logo, LightStream, Linksys, MediaTone, MeetingPlace, MeetingPlace Chime Sound, MGX, Networkers, Networking Academy, Network Registrar, PCNow, PIX, PowerPanels, ProConnect, ScriptShare, SenderBase, SMARTnet, Spectrum Expert, StackWise, The Fastest Way to Increase Your Internet Quotient, TransPath, WebEx, and the WebEx logo are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and certain other countries.

All other trademarks mentioned in this document or Website 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. (0807R)