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—Chris Saleh, Program Manager, Open Work Services Group

Sun Microsystems strengthens collaboration over distance with WebEx.

- **INDUSTRY**
  Technology

- **WEBEX APPLICATIONS**
  Meeting Center, Training Center, Event Center, Support Center, WebEx Sales Center

- **SUMMARY**
  Sun Microsystems required an enterprise-wide collaboration tool to meet the needs of a widely distributed workforce. WebEx helped Sun create an open work environment, bridging geographies while enabling employees to work conveniently from anywhere, any time. Enterprise-wide use of WebEx has significantly reduced operating costs, increased productivity, and opened new business opportunities for the company. Working closely with the WebEx team to optimize usage, Sun now conducts 1,600 WebEx meetings and hosts 8,500 attendees online every month.

- **ABOUT SUN MICROSYSTEMS**
  Line of Business
  Developer of servers, storage, software, and services

- **Headquarters**
  Santa Clara, CA

- **Number of Employees**
  38,600

- **Target Market**
  Large enterprises and organizations

- **WebEx Customer Since 2000**

Established in 1982, Sun Microsystems, Inc. is the global supplier of network computing solutions that power the world's most demanding businesses. The company's proven portfolio of systems, software, and services provides integrated solutions that enable customers to simplify their IT infrastructure, reduce costs, and manage data intelligently and securely. Among Sun's many breakthrough technologies are the Solaris Operating System and Java, the world's number one programming platform. Today, Sun conducts business in 100 countries around the globe.

The Challenge

At Sun Microsystems, the Open Work Services Group plays a critical role in maximizing both corporate productivity and employee satisfaction. "Sun formulated the Open Work Services Group to create the most effective work environment and achieve the greatest degree of work-life balance for our employees." In the last few years, however, a number of significant developments at Sun resulted in a new set of challenges for the Group. As Sun grew globally, the company became more geographically dispersed. Sun's engineering teams, for instance, suddenly spanned five sites including Bangalore, St. Petersburg, and Beijing. In addition, the acquisition of other companies and consequent reorganizations resulted in a surplus of real estate, and Sun began to close campuses. "We decided to invest in people rather than real estate, and we began offering employees the option to work at home," says Chris Saleh, Program Manager for the Open Work Services Group at Sun.

At the time, Sun's main tool for real-time collaboration was the telephone. "Some departments and newly acquired companies were using their own online meeting solutions, but we needed a standardized collaboration environment that we could make available to everyone across the company," Saleh explains. In 2006, Saleh's group conducted a corporate-wide survey that confirmed Sun was deficient in collaboration tools enabling employees to work over distance. "We needed a solution that made it possible for our employees to collaborate in real-time with co-workers and partners around the globe," he states.

The Solution

Chosen by the IT department years before, WebEx was already in place at Sun but wasn't used much. Saleh says, "We hadn't integrated WebEx properly at Sun. We knew WebEx was the market leader and offered an excellent tool set. When we realized we needed an enterprise-wide collaboration tool, we decided to re-examine our WebEx deployment." Saleh began working closely with the WebEx account team. "The WebEx account team is great. They helped us develop a business case to convince the different departments at Sun to change the way they were working with the solution," he says. As a result, Sun stopped billing individual departments for WebEx usage and converted to an unlimited plan, providing each seat with 24-hour-a-day access to all five WebEx solutions. In addition, many of the companies Sun had acquired already owned WebEx licenses. "The WebEx account team helped consolidate all our licenses worldwide," adds Saleh.

Today, Sun primarily uses WebEx Meeting Center across the organization to communicate with, train, and support internal and external customers located around the world. "Reports generated in March 2007 indicate that approximately 480 users host WebEx sessions every month and the organization conducts 70 to 80 online meetings per day. On average, we have nearly 8,500 attendees participating in WebEx meetings every month," states Saleh. The solution's intuitive capabilities facilitate remote sales calls, demonstrations, installations, and product trainings. According to Maria Vaidou, a software program marketing manager at Sun, "WebEx makes it easy to communicate with sales colleagues located throughout 96 countries." WebEx registration and automatic notifications make the sessions easy to plan, while the application sharing feature enables effective visual demonstrations. "WebEx is easy to navigate. You can see who's dialing in and can chat in real time, making the Q&A sessions especially valuable," she says.

WebEx also facilitates program and product development for global teams by providing highly interactive online meetings. For the IBIS Spares Team at Sun, WebEx enables colleagues to provide input to documents the team is creating or editing in real time. "Meeting participants review the process documents online and see their input incorporated instantly using WebEx. It makes my job much easier," says Denise Cummings, Program Manager for the team. Using WebEx, the PDM project, a multi-year effort touching many organizations at Sun, conducts online workshops, presentations, application demos, and document reviews. "WebEx provides an excellent platform to work interactively with our disparate team members. We've been able to simulate real-world scenarios across geographies, incorporate pre-recorded demos into live workshops, and troubleshoot problems in real time," says Ben Edelstein, Process Architect for the PDM Project.

The Benefits

WebEx helped the Open Work Services Group deliver on its initiative to enable Sun employees to work from anywhere, any time—reducing costs, increasing productivity, and opening new business opportunities for the company. "Today, more than half of Sun employees no longer have permanent offices. WebEx provided the collaboration tool we needed to bridge distances and geographies, and effectively boost productivity," says Saleh. As a result of the new work environment, Sun has increased employee satisfaction and saved on energy and real estate costs. "WebEx helped us transform our vision into reality. We've even developed a new consulting business to help other companies create the same type of open work organization we've created at Sun," he says.

Sun's close relationship with the WebEx account team ensured the optimal implementation and usage of WebEx throughout the organization. "Sun has a great partnership with WebEx. The WebEx account team is professional, responsive, and accommodating," remarks Saleh. At the time Sun renewed its account with WebEx, Saleh created a list of requirements for the WebEx team. "We needed WebEx to operate smoothly on the Sun Solaris platform running on the Intel X86 processor. WebEx made that happen," explains Saleh. While the majority of employees use Solaris, many of the companies that Sun acquired are Windows-centric. "Multi-platform support is very important for us. WebEx supports both Solaris and Windows, accommodating the needs of all of our employees," he says.

The Future

Since implementing the unlimited WebEx usage plan six months ago, Saleh has received a very positive response from Sun's WebEx user community. The Education Services Department at Sun was unhappy with the online solution it used to provide online product training to its customers. Saleh comments, "When they found out that WebEx was available at Sun, they switched over and are now very happy users." Saleh is also extremely satisfied with WebEx. "I know we made the right choice. We plan on using WebEx well into the future," he concludes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- WebEx helped Sun create an open work environment enabling employees to work from anywhere, any time.

- Enterprise-wide use of WebEx significantly reduced operating costs, increased productivity, and opened new business opportunities for the company.

- Working closely with the WebEx team to optimize usage, Sun now conducts 1,600 WebEx meetings and hosts 8,500 attendees online per month.