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—Marlys Furze, Manager of Digital Media

Progress Software Corporation strengthens enterprise operations with WebEx.



INDUSTRY Technology

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

WebEx Meeting Center, Event Center, Training Center, Support Center

SUMMARY

To better support its sales and marketing efforts, Progress Software Corporation decided to integrate strong web conferencing capabilities throughout its organization. Today, Progress conducts over 5500 WebEx meetings annually, strengthening communications throughout all levels of the organization and increasing geographic reach. Closer interaction with channel partners, field reps, and customers has resulted in improved marketing and sales, product development, and technical support.

ABOUT PROGRESS SOFTWARE CORPORATION

- **Line of Business**
Application infrastructure software developer
- **Headquarters**
Bedford, MA
- **Number of Employees**
1600
- **Target Market**
Blue-chip enterprises
- **WebEx Customer Since 2004**

With customers in more than 140 countries, Progress Software Corporation is a worldwide leader in application infrastructure software for the development, deployment, integration, and management of business applications. Progress technology provides the infrastructure for a wide range of applications, from ERP to financial trading. Today, over 60,000 organizations, including 90 percent of the Fortune 500, use Progress products—across industries as diverse as retail, manufacturing, telecommunications, financial services, and government. Working with 2500 global partners, the company generates over \$5 billion in sales each year.

The Challenge

To better support its direct sales and marketing efforts, as well as its community of 2500 global partners, Progress Software Corporation adopted and integrated strong Web conferencing capabilities throughout its organization. In 2004, the company asked Marlys Furze to spearhead the initiative. “We already had a Web conferencing system in place. However, it was apparent that it didn’t fit our company’s evolving needs,” recalls Furze, the company’s Manager of Digital Media Services. Furze set up a task team consisting of 30 employees worldwide to identify corporate requirements for an online meeting solution. “Our task team determined that we needed a Web conferencing solution that provided three major components: self-service, enabling employees to set up Web meetings on-the-fly; support for sophisticated Microsoft PowerPoint presentations and animations; and the flexibility to pass control between presenters,” she explains.

The Solution

After evaluating several solutions, Progress selected WebEx for its ease of use, as well as its support for sophisticated animations and multiple presenters. “We had to migrate 1500 employees from the legacy Web conferencing application to WebEx. WebEx made our global roll-out painless and seamless,” says Furze.

To provide a smooth, online meeting experience for presenters and webinar attendees while creating the most polished public broadcasts, Progress built two Web conference studios in its corporate headquarters. “These studios provide a full range of professional broadcasting equipment—such as mixer boards, video switchers, and Teleprompters—that enhance existing WebEx capabilities to a whole new level. The result is a professional, high-quality broadcast delivered through WebEx,” says Furze.

Several Progress Software departments use the multimedia studios for professional-quality WebEx broadcasts. The marketing department uses WebEx Event Center to conduct large lead generation events. “One of our divisions averages 800 registrants per WebEx event, and in the first six months of this year, we’ve already generated 4440 leads—with 12.59 percent of these leads converting into highly qualified prospects,” says Furze. In addition, Progress uses WebEx Training Center to deliver training to its field marketing, sales, and consulting organizations. “WebEx sessions focus on providing sales reps with everything they need to sell Progress products—from information on new sales techniques and marketing campaigns to product presentations and technical trainings,” she says.

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—Marlys Furze, Manager of Digital Media



Outside of the multimedia studios, Progress uses WebEx extensively throughout the enterprise for a wide range of functions, including product development, channel marketing, and customer support. WebEx also plays a key role in partner communications, providing both one-on-one sessions as well as larger group learning events that help partners increase qualified leads. For Progress Technical Support, which is spread across three worldwide locations, WebEx Support Center bridges geographic and time-zone gaps. “Using WebEx Support Center, our customers interactively demonstrate their problems on screen and pass control of their computers to Progress support staff—facilitating troubleshooting, system configuration, and installation of the company’s software products,” she remarks.

While Furze manages approximately 25 WebEx events per month within the multimedia studios, Progress conducts over 5500 WebEx sessions on a yearly basis. “WebEx has strengthened our communications at all levels of the organization, internally and externally. It’s become an essential application for us,” says Furze.

The Benefits

WebEx helped Progress Software strengthen its communications throughout the enterprise, improving channel and field interactions for better marketing and sales. “In a world where information overload is a daily occurrence, getting the message to the right people takes more than just a simple presentation slide-set,” says Furze. “WebEx makes it possible for us to disseminate large amounts of information through visually stimulating training that effectively engages the field organization and helps them increase sales.” In addition to its direct sales force, Progress realizes over 65 percent of its revenue through its partner channel, making channel communications crucial. “With the introduction of WebEx into the partner program, Progress increased the frequency and quality of channel interactions, reaching all partners—whether large, small, national, or international,” says Furze. “Because WebEx sessions show partners that our company is committed to helping them grow their businesses, it’s strengthened our channel relationships.”

Used extensively for marketing purposes, WebEx enables Progress to reach prospects all over the world. “With over 45 percent of Progress revenues coming from outside of North America, WebEx plays an essential role in our global marketing efforts,” says Furze. WebEx enables presenters to participate from any location, facilitating lead generation events. She adds, “One division within Progress generates 30 percent of global marketing leads from WebEx events.”

WebEx communication between Progress and its clients has improved product development and customer support. “During our Technology Preview Program, we deliver Proof of Concept software to our customers up to five different times, communicating with them only through WebEx,” Furze explains. “WebEx enables our customers to provide opinions and ask questions in real time. This type of interaction ultimately helps us deliver a better quality product to the market, much faster.” When it comes to providing customer support, Progress technical representatives are often located in geographies different than the customer. “WebEx greatly reduces the time required to address networking issues, view and obtain log files, and review customer environments. Now, we even provide consulting and training for specific support issues using WebEx,” she says.

The Future

Progress is very pleased with the capabilities that WebEx brings to its web conferencing efforts and plans to continue leveraging the solution. In conclusion, Furze says, “WebEx has become a powerful communications tool for almost every department in our organization, and it’s helped us achieve impressive results throughout. We’re looking forward to continued success with WebEx.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- WebEx helped Progress increase communications throughout its extended enterprise, improving channel and field interactions that result in better marketing and sales.
- By providing interactive customer communication, WebEx enabled Progress to significantly improve product development and technical support.
- Progress conducts over 5500 WebEx meetings annually, strengthening communications throughout all levels of the organization and increasing geographic reach.