

Cisco HR Function Accelerates Time to Productivity with WebEx Meeting Applications

Summary:

The Cisco® HR function needed an interactive solution to help summer interns acclimate before setting foot on the Cisco campus. With WebEx Meeting Center™, the team conducted highly successful pre-internship orientation sessions that significantly accelerated interns' time to productivity. Since then, the HR function has used WebEx® to optimize its university recruitment efforts and its key program deployments, transforming how the function interacts with both prospective and current Cisco employees.

The Cisco Human Resources function includes approximately 700 HR professionals who support the company's 66,000 employees around the world. To maintain and optimize such a large HR function, the company employs a team of HR professionals whose task is to carry out a training and development strategy specifically for human resources personnel at Cisco.

The Challenge

For the past two summers, the HR function at Cisco has offered 12-week internships designed to identify and train emerging HR talent. "Like anyone who runs a summer internship program, we've found that 12 weeks just isn't a very long time," says Deborah Casaubon, HR director at Cisco. "Ideally, we like to make job offers to as many interns as possible by the end of each summer. But that means maximizing our time with them, so that everyone feels comfortable moving on to the next step."

Casaubon and her team had attempted other strategies to help interns acclimate to the Cisco environment. For instance, in the previous year, interns would participate in the traditional conference call designed to introduce them to the program, but that approach lacked the interactivity that Casaubon was looking for. "We wanted to do everything that we could to develop these interns into a cohort before they even set foot on the Cisco campus," says Casaubon. "And we wanted to use Cisco technology to do it. So that's why we turned to WebEx."

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— Deborah Casaubon, director of HR, Cisco

The Solution

Casaubon knew that Cisco WebEx Meeting Center provided a range of interactive features that would be perfect for helping new interns adapt to their summer working environment. "I was especially interested in trying out the video feature," she says. "I knew that it would offer the interns a window into Cisco, and it would really heighten the level of engagement for everyone involved." In the weeks leading up to the summer of 2008, Casaubon scheduled an online orientation session for her incoming interns, passing control of the screen to each attendee so that they could tell a little bit about themselves and draw out their career paths on an interactive map. Then Casaubon divided the meeting into breakout sessions to facilitate intimate question-and-answer sessions.

The pre-internship orientation sessions were so successful that Casaubon and her team began considering how they could proliferate WebEx technology throughout their entire recruiting strategy.

For instance, Cisco recruits from a number of universities with HR clubs, and those clubs need to offer career-building activities for full certification. Cisco was able to help the HR club at the University of South Carolina achieve its certification by hosting WebEx-enabled sessions in which students could engage in an open dialogue with HR executives. “The students gained the certification that they needed, and we were able to introduce this technology onto the campus. So it was win-win,” says Casaubon.

Other initiatives quickly followed. To help senior management absorb and apply new compensation and incentive changes, Casaubon’s team delivered Director and Manager Training sessions to over 600 Cisco employees using Cisco WebEx Event Center™. The function also uses WebEx for intensive HR training sessions designed to develop HR talent. “We’ve only been using WebEx for a few months, and we keep finding new ways to make it work for us,” says Casaubon. “The potential is just enormous.”

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— Deborah Casaubon, director of HR, Cisco

The Benefits

After using WebEx to conduct online orientation sessions for incoming interns, Casaubon and her team immediately noticed a difference in the strength of the 2008 cohort. “These interns came on board and bonded from day one,” she says. “In fact, this is one of the strongest cohorts we’ve seen. And WebEx was the key to accelerating their time to productivity.”

WebEx technology will help transform how the Cisco HR function recruits on college campuses. By delivering high-impact interactive sessions to university students, Cisco provides a valuable service while differentiating itself on campus. “There’s no question in my mind that WebEx will increase both the visibility and the impact that our function can have on college campuses,” says Casaubon. “With WebEx, we’ve found a very dynamic way to tell the Cisco story using Cisco technology, and the response from students has been phenomenal.”

WebEx enables training sessions and large-scale events that connect more team members from more locations at a far lower total cost. For instance, the HR functions’ Director and Manager training on Compensation would have been nearly impossible to execute in such a short period of time without help from WebEx. “I can’t imagine reaching that many managers from all over Cisco in such a coordinated, streamlined, and cost-effective fashion,” says Casaubon. “And the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with over 98 percent saying that they would attend a similar event in the future.”

The Future

With the success of the Cisco HR function's recruitment efforts on university campuses, Casaubon and her team are launching an HR Academy so that even more students can learn about HR as a discipline. "As far as I'm concerned, this is only the beginning," says Casaubon. "If this is what we can do in just a few months, it's exciting to imagine what the next few years might bring."

Highlights:

- By using WebEx Meeting Center to conduct online orientation sessions for incoming interns, the Cisco HR function accelerated interns' time to productivity.
- WebEx technology is changing both the visibility and the impact that Cisco can have on college campuses.
- WebEx enables training sessions and large-scale events that connect more team members from more locations at a far lower total cost.



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