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— Jim Weatherall, Senior Vice President for Kline Research Group



Kline & Company transforms global processes with WebEx.

Customer and industry

Kline & Company, global management consulting and market research

Cisco WebEx services

WebEx Event Center, Meeting Center, Production Services

Summary

Kline & Company needed to improve global customer interaction, expedite project turnaround times, and reduce expenses. Using WebEx Meeting Center, Kline increased the quality and frequency of project interaction, engaging customers throughout project lifecycles and improving communication without travel. WebEx Event Center transformed Kline’s sales process, slashing sales cycles and increasing conversion rates dramatically while boosting productivity.

About Kline & Company

- **Line of business:**
Global management consulting and market research
- **Headquarters:**
Little Falls, NJ
- **Number of employees:**
110
- **Target market:**
Chemical and materials, consumer product, and energy and life science industries
- **WebEx customer since 2003**

Established in 1959, Kline & Company, Inc. provides leading management consulting and market research services to the world’s largest multinational companies, as well as local and regional start-up firms. Whether supporting growth initiatives or demands for improved business performance, Kline management consulting services offer practical solutions based on robust analysis and close collaboration with client teams across the globe. Kline’s market research group provides a variety of comprehensive reports and services covering the industrial, professional, and consumer sectors.

The challenge

In 2001, Kline & Company began looking for a way to improve global client outreach. The company’s consulting assignments normally require frequent meetings with clients during every project stage, but travel was becoming increasingly challenging. “Constant travel was financially unfeasible, and adhering to timelines was difficult. We needed a solution that would help us reduce operation costs and expedite project turnaround times for teams that spanned the globe,” says John Hadley, Director of IT for Kline & Company. “We wanted everyone to have the same meeting experience virtually, as if we were all sitting in one room.”

The solution

Kline heard about WebEx through MCI. “We began using WebEx as part of our MCI teleconference package but as our needs grew, we needed a fully integrated web collaboration solution,” recalls Hadley. Kline evaluated Raindance, 1,2,3 GO, and Microsoft Live Meeting. “Live Meeting had operating system limitations and required specific software to make it work. WebEx, on the other hand, is platform independent and doesn’t require software installation on client computers,” he says. Working directly with WebEx also provided additional benefits, including integrated telephony, integration with MS Outlook, and a Kline-branded portal site from which users launch WebEx solutions.

Initially, Kline used WebEx Meeting Center within its management consulting group to facilitate client and project team interactions. “More than 75% of our projects have clients and management teams spread across the world,” explains Tom Aldred, Director of Customer Engagements for Kline Management Consulting. Kline manages approximately 40 projects at one time with three to six people working on each. “Each project team meets approximately 20 times over the duration of the project, which normally lasts three months on average. That’s 800 global meetings, and we conduct all of them using WebEx,” says Aldred.

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Kline soon expanded WebEx into its market research group, adopting WebEx Event Center for pre- and post-sales activities. “Now we host a 30-minute WebEx seminar for every study we produce and reach up to 50 prospects at a time,” says Jim Weatherall, Senior Vice President for Kline Research Group. The seminars start the group’s sales cycle by generating interested leads. “WebEx seminars often lead to one-on-one online meetings or in-person visits by our sales team,” he explains. For existing subscribers, Kline’s market research group conducts one-hour WebEx sessions to review reports in detail, giving customers the opportunity to interact with Kline project managers. “These WebEx events help us maintain lasting relationships with our customers by ensuring they use their reports on an ongoing basis,” says Weatherall. In addition, Kline records all Event Center sessions and posts them on the company website, enabling both existing subscribers and new prospects to view them at their convenience.

To create professional online events, Kline turned to WebEx Production Services. “Initially, we tried to produce an event on our own and found that there were more components than we realized,” says Hadley. The WebEx Production Services team worked with Kline through every stage of the event, providing presentation scripting, on-hold music, and a professional moderator.

Today, Kline also uses WebEx enterprisewide for internal company communications. “Our telecommuting corporate culture and distributed global enterprise make WebEx an essential tool for us,” explains Hadley. Kline uses WebEx for all types of interactions, including quarterly and sales meetings. “There is not one meeting at Kline that does not have a WebEx component,” he remarks. Recently, Kline also added WebEx WebOffice to facilitate file sharing with associates around the world, without having to connect through the corporate VPN.

The benefits

WebEx transformed Kline’s sales process, shortening sales cycles and increasing conversion rates dramatically while boosting productivity. “WebEx increased our market reach by enabling us to present our offerings to 12 people at a time, on average. Visiting each person individually would take us months,” says Weatherall. Recently, Kline started using Meeting Center to demo its new products. “When we launched our new database product, we converted 100% of our prospects into sales within 30 days by conducting WebEx demos,” he says. Using WebEx has improved sales efficiency as well. “WebEx streamlines our sales process, makes us more productive, and yields faster success,” states Weatherall.

With WebEx, Kline increased the quality and frequency of customer interaction significantly, engaging customers comfortably throughout their projects. “Without incurring additional costs or time commitments, our teams now conduct four interim project meetings with customers instead of one. Frequent WebEx meetings ensure we deliver what the customer expects,” he says. “With the types of time, geographic, and efficiency challenges our company and our customers are facing, the only logical solution is WebEx,” Hadley remarks.

The future

With WebEx serving as the company’s core communications infrastructure, Kline plans to continue leveraging the solution to support global expansion. “We recently opened new offices in Shanghai, Delhi, and Prague, and as we continue to grow, we’d like to use WebEx for new employee training,” says Hadley. Kline is investigating the addition of WebEx Training Center for internal and customer training and WebEx Support Center to provide better technical support to international offices. The company is also exploring the WebEx multipoint video capability to replace its existing videoconferencing system. Hadley concludes, “As the complexity of our organization, our customers, and our projects increases, we will rely on WebEx even more. WebEx is a much more effective way of doing business.”

Highlights

- WebEx Event Center transformed Kline’s sales process, shortening sales cycles and increasing conversion rates dramatically while boosting productivity.
- Using WebEx Meeting Center, Kline increased the quality and frequency of project interaction significantly, engaging customers and improving team communication.
- WebEx serves as Kline’s core communications infrastructure, used for nearly every internal, project, and sales meeting the company conducts.