



Law Firm Adopts Online Conferencing for Productivity and Competitive Advantage

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Legal

Customer Profile

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe was established in 1863 in San Francisco and today is one of the world's most prestigious corporate law firms. It employs more than 2,300 people and has offices in 18 countries.

Business Situation

As a technology leader, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe needed a more efficient approach for training attorneys and other staff on new software rollouts, updates, and patches.

Solution

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe will deploy the online conferencing solution based on the 2007 release of Microsoft Office Live Meeting and integrated with the 2007 Microsoft Office system and other Microsoft technologies.

Benefits

- Easier access to training
- Faster software rollouts
- More efficient use of meeting rooms
- Enhanced reputation as technology leader

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Melissa Self, Applications Engineer, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

For well over a century, the law firm of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe has provided dynamic and innovative representation to the world's leading financial and corporate enterprises. Today, the firm is known for its extranets, knowledge bases, and other applications of sophisticated information technology on behalf of its clients. Now, the firm is deploying a solution based on Microsoft® Office Live Meeting to help streamline IT training and, ultimately, provide a foundation for other kinds of training as well as marketing demonstrations, meetings, and even depositions and case reviews. With this solution, the firm's IT executives anticipate providing wider access to training initiatives designed to help to expedite software rollouts, boost instructors' productivity, enhance the firm's competitiveness, and bolster its reputation as a technology innovator.



“With the Live Meeting Webcam, we will be able to deploy training and other video conferencing from virtually anywhere.”

Bill Schlich, Applications Manager,
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

Situation

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP was founded in 1863 in San Francisco, just as the city was emerging from the California Gold Rush into a powerful commercial center. On a foundation of expertise in public finance and corporate law, the firm has grown into one of the premier international law firms, employing more than 2,300 people and encompassing 13 practice areas.

In keeping with the pioneering spirit of its founders, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe is an innovative enterprise. This is particularly the case when it comes to using information technology to help its more than 950 attorneys tackle a caseload that includes complex transactions and litigation involving some of the world's largest financial institutions and multinational corporations.

At its Global Operations Center in Wheeling, West Virginia, the firm develops and deploys sophisticated solutions that help its corporate clients track, interpret, and comply with ever-changing laws and regulations in hundreds of jurisdictions worldwide. These solutions include more than 100 extranets enabling Orrick attorneys and clients to share knowledge databases, collaborate in state-of-the-art document assembly and effectively manage complex litigations involving numerous parties and counsel.

To maintain the effectiveness of its significant IT investment, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe must ensure that attorneys and other staff members are well-versed in these solutions and the technologies on which they are built. As such, IT training plays a central role in the firm's success.

Maintaining an efficient and effective way of delivering IT training, however, is an ongoing challenge for a firm with attorneys and staff distributed among 18 offices in seven countries. In a typical month, the firm

provides two to four sessions on topics ranging from operating-system updates or patches to major application rollouts.

Solution

After having tried other industry products to address training-related challenges, Orrick, Herrington, Sutcliffe decided to incorporate Live Meeting into its IT portfolio. According to Melissa Self, Applications Engineer at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, this decision was based largely on Live Meeting's event-planning tools, ease of administration, and support for remote training. The firm also liked its enhanced video and chat capabilities, streamlined layout, improved user interface, and comprehensive integration with other Microsoft technologies.

In 2006, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP deployed Live Meeting 2005, and the following year the firm deployed the beta version of Live Meeting 2007 to a pilot group of 25 IT professionals. As Self explains, “The decision to pilot the 2007 version of Live Meeting was an easy one, as the firm is continually researching and reviewing new technologies for attorneys, staff, and clients.”

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe plans to use Live Meeting for IT training initially, then for training on law-related topics, and finally for day-to-day staff activities and marketing. The firm also will test selected features of the Microsoft RoundTable™ communications device and will consider integrating Live Meeting with Webcam capabilities to create powerful business applications. The firm expects to deploy Live Meeting 2007 enterprisewide in 2008. Once that deployment is complete, the solution will be used by more than 500 Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe employees worldwide.

Benefits

By deploying Microsoft Office Live Meeting, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe expects to

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realize benefits that include more efficient training, higher staff productivity, and a stronger competitive position.

Cutting Travel and Downtime

Based on positive feedback from pilot users, especially regarding the streamlined user interface, Self believes the Live Meeting solution will transform the way Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe provides IT training. For example, the firm will use the solution to provide all training for smaller IT rollouts and some training for larger rollouts—a move that is expected to reduce the need for instructors to travel and reduce the downtime and productivity losses that travel frequently entails. The firm also expects the solution to increase the opportunity for students to access a training session whenever, and however often, they like.

“We look forward to using Microsoft Office Live Meeting as a core tool for a virtual meeting place to support training and demonstrations for attorneys, staff, and clients,” Self says. “In addition, with Live Meeting our IT instructors will be able to record high-fidelity training sessions, when and where it is most convenient, even after hours or from their home.”

Delivering More Effective Training

As Bill Schlich, Applications Manager at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, explains, students, too, will enjoy the flexibility provided by the solution. “We expect IT training to be more effective with Live Meeting because students can attend a given session at the most convenient time and place, be that during regular work hours or not,” he says. “They also can follow a session at their own pace and repeat it as needed. This will help the firm bring applications, patches, and updates into widespread use that much faster, improving productivity overall and helping us to serve clients more effectively.”

Even within a session that is attended “live” (in parallel with recording), Schlich believes that training will be more effective than before, thanks to the support in Live Meeting for in-session application switching, document uploads, and increased storage capacity. “These capabilities can make IT training more effective because we can provide participants relevant documents as they request and can show exactly how different applications interact with one another,” he says.

Another Live Meeting capability, the enhanced event planner, will help the firm to ensure that everyone who needs training on a given topic can be informed about upcoming sessions in time to put them on the calendar. Instructors, in particular, will benefit. “The event planner also will help instructors to plan training sessions, enabling them to focus on the subject matter instead of on logistics and administration,” Schlich says.

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe also plans to take advantage of the Live Meeting Webcam component. “With the Live Meeting Webcam, we will be able to deploy training and other video conferencing from virtually anywhere,” Schlich explains. “This will make meeting planning easier and help us to reserve our limited AV conference rooms for special events.”

Boosting Competitiveness

In addition to IT training, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe will use the Live Meeting solution to instruct staff members on vital law-related topics such as the impact of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. The firm also will use the solution for demonstrating its extranet capabilities to prospective clients and for day-to-day activities such as depositions, department or practice meetings, and case or document review with a practice group or client.

For More Information

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For more information about Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, call (304) 231-2500 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.orrick.com>

Schlich says that such versatility is due in part to the support in Live Meeting for Cybertrust/SAS70-certified data centers and secure communication across firewalls using the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol. "When it comes time to use the technology for attorney/client meetings, of course we will put all necessary due-diligence and risk-management procedures in place," he says. "At the same time, we do not anticipate limits with respect to confidentiality or archiving guidelines for using this technology, and that is because of its powerful security foundation."

For whatever purpose the firm decides to ultimately implement the Live Meeting solution, Self envisions that it will help to build on a long-standing tradition at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe. "Having a powerful, versatile solution for online conferencing will emphasize a long-time commitment at Orrick, Herrington, Sutcliffe to using technology in creative ways.," she says. "This will make us even more competitive in attracting new clients and new legal talent alike."

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