



“We look upon Workspace as a mission critical service that helps us attain across the board efficiencies in all of our programs.”

— Lisa Schorr, Executive Director of Project HEALTH

Project HEALTH increases efficiency and provides better care with WebEx Workspace.



INDUSTRY

Nationwide Volunteer Organization

WEBEX APPLICATIONS

WebEx Workspace

SUMMARY

WebEx Workspace increases operational efficiency for a volunteer organization managing multiple programs across many sites.

ABOUT PROJECT HEALTH

Line of Business

Nationwide Volunteer Organization

Headquarters

Boston, MA

Number of Employees

Project HEALTH is supported by a combination of full-time staff (6) and volunteer leaders (300)

WebEx Customer Since 2002

Project HEALTH – a nationwide volunteer organization providing fitness and nutrition programs and health services advocacy for low-income families – is using WebEx Workspace to gain efficiencies in operations among its Boston, New York, Providence, R.I. and Washington D.C. offices.

“Project HEALTH unites medical centers, community agencies, and undergraduate students at major universities to provide underserved families with a total package of services in an effort to interrupt the well-established link between poverty and poor health. With six full time staff members, and 300 volunteers, Project HEALTH has provided over 75,000 hours of service in the past year alone – yielding a substantial impact on the lives of 3,000 families in these four cities,” says Lisa Schorr, Executive Director of Project HEALTH.

The Challenge

It is crucial that work is shared among the 4 Project HEALTH offices. Because many programs are similar from site to site, it is good practice to take what one site has done and adapt it for the other sites.

“Before we had WebEx Workspace, the technology side of that was really hard for us,” says Schorr. “We couldn’t network. Each of our offices is based in a different hospital. We were doing an enormous amount of e-mailing, but essentially if you wanted to know what was going on at all four sites, you’d have to phone someone at each site. It was incredibly time consuming.”

Project HEALTH also had some shared storage resources, but it was hardly

adequate for the amount of file sharing that was going on between the different sites, and some sites did not have access to this resource. The most obvious challenge was that Project HEALTH staff and volunteers were duplicating work, because they didn’t realize what had already been done. Plus, with a high reliance on student volunteers, Project HEALTH had no way of ensuring that documents created on their personal computers were still accessible when the students graduated.

The Solution

To ensure better information sharing and collaboration, Project HEALTH leaders started looking for a Web-based solution that would allow them to share files, assure continuity and achieve efficiencies. Project HEALTH didn’t have an internal technical resource to compare the various products, so a product management and technology consultant was brought in. After research and evaluation, the consultant recommended the hosted service now known as WebEx Workspace (formerly Intranets.com).

The investment of nearly 10% of the total budget into a new Web-based technology seemed risky at first. The biggest concern was that the new Web-based technology was not going to be adopted by the hundreds of volunteers, and that people would simply resent the new way of sharing documents online.

“In the end, that hasn’t been the case, people have taken to sharing their files very quickly on the WebEx Workspace service,” says Schorr.

The Benefit

Before adopting Workspace, Project HEALTH staff and volunteers had been sharing files on the password-protected section of the organization's public web site. A volunteer without a technology background might accidentally disrupt a file, enter unwanted changes into other files, or even wipe out the entire Web site. Workspace, with its permission-based access, gives Project HEALTH staff the ability to provide different privileges to different individuals.

Before Project HEALTH started using Workspace, they had to rely on students to put in place systems and databases using fairly advanced technology. But maintenance of those one-off systems became a burden – especially once the students have graduated and the knowledge of system design and maintenance was lost.

"Now, with Workspace, somebody who is comfortable just in a basic way on a computer can sit down and design a database that the next year somebody else can readily pick up."

"Most of our student volunteers are pretty savvy in terms of using the Internet and computers, but they don't necessarily have a technology background. The fact that they can sign up as a volunteer and immediately sit right down and access a file in the Workspace Document Manager, or input to a database file, makes a huge difference to us."

"Altogether, Workspace is making it easier to be more efficient. It's saving us a lot of time, but the bigger gain is the increase in work quality; people's work benefits so much from collaboration with

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— Lisa Schorr, Executive Director of Project HEALTH

others in similar positions. Workspace allows us to really leverage the fact that we are a multi-site program."

Sharing Materials and Training

"Many of our programs not only improve children's health but enable them to be active and have fun, and we use photos to communicate the energy of the programs to potential partners and funders, as well as to share the fun with volunteers, children in the programs, and their families."

"Now, when I'm preparing for a training session on a particular topic, I can just go into our Workspace training folder and look at all the past training sessions on that topic, from national and all of our local sites, and pick and choose training exercises from that."

"Or, if I'm writing a proposal for funding for a program we've had before at another site, I want to pull together everything we've ever written about that particular program before and pick out the best of it. If I had to call everyone in four different cities, that's a lot of time. It's easier to access our Workspace Document Manager and browse through the files."

Advantages for Fundraising

Workspace has also been helpful in documenting what Project HEALTH is accomplishing, and communicating that information to the people and institutions that provide its funding.

Ms. Schorr explains, "We've used the Workspace Database Manager to aggregate statistics from our hospital-based programs, such as the Family Help Desk, where hundreds of families seek help. It's powerful to be able to update the hospitals we work with about the needs of the patient population, and it gives us the data foundation we need to justify requests for funding from the institutions and individuals that support us."

The Future

Project HEALTH sees Workspace as a mission critical service that helps them attain across the board efficiencies in a multitude of programs they are running.

"We're actually using Workspace to try to encourage people to change the way they work and think about their work."

"Project HEALTH is now entering a growth phase and we expect to launch five more sites by 2008. Workspace will be a vital piece of the expansion process, linking the growing number of sites together the way our current sites are linked -- enabling new sites to build on the experience of existing sites, and enabling those of us who will spend an increasing proportion of our time traveling the Project HEALTH network to continue our work seamlessly while we're on the road," Schorr concluded.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Project HEALTH needed an easier way to align objectives, speed up collaborative projects, and avoid duplicating work between its locations.
- After implementing WebEx Workspace, the non-profit organization enjoyed faster deployment of its fundraising, training, and civic projects.
- WebEx Workspace also allowed the organization to protect its valuable document integrity and security and provide even better care to the more than 3,000 families it serves in four locations.