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Web Meetings Enhance Recruiting and Expand Applicant Pool

Arizona Auditor General uses video to screen out-of-state job candidates, reducing need for onsite interviews.

Challenge

The Arizona Office of the Auditor General serves as an independent source of financial and programmatic information for state and local government entities. With audit responsibility for state agencies, counties, universities, community colleges, and school districts, the agency helps to ensure that the state makes prudent use of public money, property, and other resources.

As Arizona's chief auditor, the Office of the Auditor General is dedicated to providing accurate, high-quality information to help public agencies and residents make informed decisions about the state's operations and financial resources. To maintain its high auditing standards, the agency makes it a top priority to find and hire the most qualified staff. "We have detailed manuals that outline rigorous auditing policies and procedures, but we depend on the skills and experience of our staff to implement our guidelines and help ensure that our audits are accurate and produce the best, most valuable information," says Joe Moore, director of IT services for the Office of the Auditor General. "The quality of our work and the success of our organization depend on our ability to attract and hire the best possible candidates and then retain them."

To broaden the reach of its recruiting efforts to offsite candidates within Arizona as well as out-of-state applicants, the agency decided to find an online meeting application that staff could use to conduct video interviews with job prospects. "Before moving to an online solution, we relied on phone calls for first-round interviews with prospective employees. If candidates progressed to the next round, they needed to cover their own travel costs for in-person interviews," Moore says. "We needed a cost-effective solution that would allow us to find the best employees no matter where they were located. Moreover, we wanted to demonstrate the agency's commitment to using forward-thinking technology while maximizing resources."

Solution

When the Arizona Office of the Auditor General began searching for a web-based meeting application, Moore and his team evaluated several solutions, but none compared to Cisco WebEx™ solutions. "The agency's ability to interview out-of-state candidates hinged on our capacity to provide cost-effective video conferences," says Moore. "WebEx technology is robust enough that we can clearly see candidates' reactions to questions and gauge their body language. It's an ideal solution for interviewing candidates remotely at a reasonable cost."

Because Cisco WebEx® technology is a hosted software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution, Moore and his team were able to quickly implement online meeting applications without adding IT infrastructure or staff. "Years ago, we were the first state agency in Arizona to adopt Cisco VoIP (voice over IP)," says Moore. "Then we became the first state agency to use WebEx meeting applications. We've always tried to keep pace with technology that can help us make better use of our resources, and WebEx solutions definitely help us do that."

Summary

Customer Name:

The Arizona Office of the Auditor General

Industry:

State auditing agency

Location:

Phoenix, AZ

Number of Employees:

180

Challenge:

- Enable agency to expand recruitment efforts to local offsite and out-of-state candidates
- Allow full evaluation of candidates during remote interviews
- Implement cost-effective technology to maximize state agency resources

Solution:

- High-quality video effectively conveys candidates' body language and demeanor
- Hosted technology allows for rapid implementation without additional IT resources
- Online meetings offer stable connectivity and flexible access for remote candidates

Results:

- Reduced need for in-person interviews for local offsite and out-of-state candidates
- Allowed state agency with limited resources to offer sophisticated video conferencing
- Reduced travel time and expenses for job candidates and agency staff



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Among other advantages, Cisco® WebEx technology can be easily deployed multiple times to many users. “With other solutions we explored, we always had to worry about bypassing firewalls and making sure that our system was compatible with our users’ systems,” he says. “With WebEx technology, candidates can connect from home, universities, libraries, or any location that has a computer with an Internet connection and a webcam. That level of flexibility was a key consideration for us.”

Moore and his team also found that WebEx technology provides stable, reliable connectivity, another important feature that makes it possible for the agency to conduct interviews remotely. “Before we started using online meetings, we were concerned that the video would look choppy or that people would get disconnected. No one wants to be interrupted by technical issues in the middle of an interview,” Moore says. “Even though we interview candidates who may have slower connection speeds, we don’t run into problems. The technology just works.”

Because WebEx solutions offer strong security features, agency staff can also use WebEx meetings to communicate with employees at state organizations during the auditing process. “We work with highly sensitive information, so the solutions we implement must be secure,” Moore says. “With WebEx, we can deliver confidential presentations and share applications with complete confidence that state information will remain private.”

“We can use WebEx technology to make immediate hiring decisions without needing to meet distant candidates in person, accelerating the hiring process and saving time and money for everyone involved.”

—Joe Moore, director of IT services, Arizona Office of the Auditor General

Results

With Cisco WebEx solutions, the Office of the Auditor General has been able to significantly enhance its recruiting process and expand its pool of highly qualified applicants in a cost-effective manner. The agency can now screen remote job candidates so effectively that it has been able to eliminate the need for final in-person interviews for nearly all of its local offsite and out-of state applicants. “At first, we thought we would only use video conferencing for initial interviews. But WebEx meetings make it possible for us to see candidates, interact with them, and determine if they’re a good fit without actually having to meet with them in person,” Moore says. “We can use WebEx technology to make immediate hiring decisions without needing to meet distant candidates in person, accelerating the hiring process and saving time and money for everyone involved.”

WebEx solutions not only help potential employees reduce travel, but have also enabled agency staff to cut travel time and be more productive. “When an organization is audited, our staff frequently meets with their employees to keep them updated. Instead of driving to locations all over the state, our staff now have the option to meet with them online,” says Moore. “WebEx meetings give us more options for getting things done.”

In addition to client meetings, the agency uses Cisco WebEx technology for internal staff meetings, technical support, and trainings, allowing employees to interact and take advantage of opportunities to build their job skills. “We operate three offices in Arizona, and our auditors often work onsite with clients,” Moore says. “Before we began using WebEx solutions, it was difficult to get everyone in the same room on the same day. WebEx technology makes it much easier to organize meetings,

and more employees have access to the latest training information they need to do their jobs effectively.”

By using WebEx solutions, the agency has also strengthened its role as a leading advocate for innovative, cost-saving technologies within Arizona’s public sector. “Many state agencies are facing tight budgets and are looking to cut costs wherever they can,” Moore says. “Online meetings allow us to provide more services while keeping costs low.”

Next Steps

In the future, the Office of the Auditor General plans to expand its use of Cisco WebEx technology to record training sessions so staff can view them at their convenience, and to demonstrate new technology solutions to remote field staff. Moore and his team also hope to change how the agency’s employees think about their jobs overall. “By using WebEx solutions, we can work more quickly and productively than we did before,” he says. “The technology allows us to make more effective use of our time and resources, which is a responsibility that we take very seriously.”

For More Information

- To find out more about Cisco WebEx, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/webex>
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