HEARST

Hearst streamlines meetings and collaboration, delivers an improved user experience, and saves money with Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing.

Company: Hearst
Website: http://www.hearst.com/
Company Size: 20,000
Country/Region: 150+ countries worldwide
Industry: Media, Information & Services

Company Profile: Hearst is a diversified media, information and services company based in New York, NY. Its major interests span across more than 360 businesses, including cable television networks, medical and information and services, television stations, newspapers, and more than 300 magazines worldwide.

Software Solutions & Deployment Enablers:
- Skype for Business Online
- Skype Meetings
- Skype for Business Voice
- PSTN Conferencing
- Skype Operations Framework

"Our employees are busy. When they're traveling, out in the field, or working remotely, they need to be able to join meetings quickly. The mobile client for Skype for Business Online enables them to go into their calendar, click a link, and with PSTN Conferencing get a call-back to their phone to instantly connect to a meeting."

Patrick Swanson
Enterprise Technology Manager, Hearst

"Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing is an easy solution to learn. It's flexible and streamlines management for our IT group. By deploying a single, consolidated communication and collaboration toolset, we're saving time and money, and delivering an optimal experience for users."

Chris Suozzi
Executive Director of Systems Architecture, Hearst

Hearst media and information services company consolidated on a single, integrated communication platform, simplified collaboration, and drove cost savings with Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing.

Business Need

Founded in 1887, Hearst is a private media and information company with 20,000 employees and 360 businesses in over 150 countries worldwide. With diverse businesses including Print, Television, Online, Automotive, and Healthcare, Hearst was burdened by multiple communication and collaboration tools in use across the company. User accounts were hard to monitor and manage, the diversity of tools created confusion for employees, and the aggregate costs were mounting. Hearst moved to Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing to consolidate meeting solutions, simplify collaboration for employees, and drive cost savings.

Solution and Benefits

Consolidating on a single platform reduces complexity and streamlines IT
A global company composed of a broad set of businesses around the globe, Hearst had dozens of communication and collaboration solutions in use across the organization. Costs were mounting, and the solutions were increasingly difficult to monitor and manage. Chris Suozzi, Executive Director of Systems Architecture, recalled, "From an IT perspective Hearst has historically been a decentralized organization, with users selecting their own solutions. This led to dozens of standalone solutions, with different user experiences for each, and a host of accounts remaining open after employees left the company. It was costly and burdensome to manage."

Hearst knew they needed to streamline their solution set and chose Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing. "We wanted to provide a stable, reliable platform for telephony and conferencing, simplifying the user experience, while exploiting the full power of integration with Outlook and the rest of the Office 365 toolset," shared Suozzi.

They also knew they needed a flexible approach that would address the specific needs of their user groups while meeting their business objectives. "Hearst is a large corporation composed of hundreds of different businesses that vary widely," said

Microsoft

Suozzi. "We have disparate users, with varying levels of technical proficiency, each with unique requirements for a toolset. Skype for Business Online is flexible enough to tailor it to each of our user populations."

Well-planned rollout ensures success, delighting users with simplified collaboration
The Hearst team understood that a successful deployment would require preparation. They built a plan to ready and test their network, and prepare employees through a phased rollout approach, starting with their Television division.

"We evaluated and tested our network, creating custom Skype for Business client policies where needed. We conducted a data-driven user analysis, leveraging data from the Skype for Business Online system and user group surveys. We then tailored our deployment to ensure the solution worked well on our network, and met the specific needs of our employees," shared Patrick Swanson, Enterprise Technology Manager.

Hearst also worked to build easily consumable training and readiness materials they tested with a pilot group, then optimized those materials based on feedback. They also secured executive level sponsorship to champion their efforts. "Our C-level executive sponsor was key. He had a good grasp of the needs of our user population, and was instrumental in generating interest and momentum," said Suozzi.

One of the key benefits the Hearst team showcased for users was the enhanced mobility and ease of use that Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing offered. PSTN Conferencing for Skype for Business Online enabled employees to attend meetings from any device or telephone by using a dial-in number and conference passcode. This allowed users the flexibility to easily join meetings while mobile, or when they were in locations where internet access was limited. "Our employees are busy. When they're traveling, out in the field, or working remotely, they need to be able to join meetings quickly. The mobile client for Skype for Business Online enables them to go into their calendar, click a link, and with PSTN Conferencing get a call-back to their phone to instantly connect to a meeting," highlighted Swanson.

Feedback on call quality has been very positive. "Skype for Business Online is so much easier to use than prior solutions we've had. Everything is in one place, and the voice quality is top notch. I work 100% remotely, and Skype for Business is better for me than using traditional conference bridges or even a landline," shared Swanson.

While employees have enjoyed the streamlined simplicity of the Skype for Business Online solution, so has IT. "Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing is an easy solution to learn. It's flexible and streamlines management for our IT group. By deploying a single, consolidated communication and collaboration toolset, we're saving time and money, and delivering an optimal experience for users," added Suozzi.

Looking to the Future

Building on the successful rollout to the Television division, Suozzi and Swanson are taking the skills and experience they've gained to scale Skype for Business Online with PSTN Conferencing across the company. They plan to leverage one of their CTO's core principles, being a "cloud-first" company, as central to their framework for growth moving forward. "We are on track to meet the initial cost savings we projected at the outset with Skype for Business Online, and expect those savings to continue to grow as we rollout to additional divisions," offered Suozzi. "In addition, we look forward to increasing telephony usage and full-functioning Cloud PBX across the company."