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—Mike Lelivelt, Senior Manager of Informatics Applications

## Affymetrix improves customer support and broadens market reach with WebEx.



### LINE OF BUSINESS

Genetic analysis tools for life science research and clinical healthcare applications

### WEBEX SERVICE IN USE

Event Center, Meeting Center

### SUMMARY

Affymetrix required an easy-to-use remote support solution to provide seamless technical support to customers worldwide. WebEx Meeting Center deployed easily across customers' computers, making support calls more effective. WebEx Event Center enabled Affymetrix to deliver better communications to its geographically dispersed customers and partners. As a result, Affymetrix broadened its market reach and shortened its information delivery cycles

### ABOUT AFFYMETRIX

#### Headquarters

Santa Clara, CA

#### Number of employees

1,100

#### TARGET MARKET

Pharmaceutical, biotechnology, agrichemical, diagnostics, consumer products organizations, and academic research institutes

#### WebEx Customer Since 2000

Founded in 1991, Affymetrix is a pioneer in developing and commercializing breakthrough systems that facilitate genome research. The company's integrated product and service offerings, including the GeneChip® platform, enable pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, research institutes, and other organizations worldwide to analyze complex genetic data and examine the relationship between genes and human health, effectively transforming science into healthcare.

#### The Challenge

In 2000, Affymetrix needed a better way to provide technical support to its worldwide customer base. In order to reduce travel time and expense, the company tried an online remote support solution. "We needed to interact with our customers and partners without traveling, and troubleshooting by phone was ineffective," recalls Mike Lelivelt, Senior Manager of Informatics Applications at Affymetrix. "We tried deploying a competing web conferencing solution, but, in our opinion, it didn't work seamlessly across multiple firewalls and browser types." At the same time, the marketing communications department at Affymetrix required a vehicle to deliver financial disclosure reports to investor audiences. "We decided to find an effective online solution that would meet a variety of our enterprise needs," says Lelivelt.

#### The Solution

After researching online solutions, Lelivelt introduced WebEx Meeting Center into the technical support department at Affymetrix. WebEx easily deployed across customers' systems without requiring reconfiguration of firewall settings. Lelivelt

says, "WebEx gave us a much smoother user experience, and easy access to the customers' computers made our customer support calls much more effective. In fact, Meeting Center was so effective that during a single product launch I conducted more than 40 WebEx meetings within a two-month period. Meeting Center made it possible for me to communicate personally with a large portion of our customer base in a short time frame."

Lelivelt discovered new applications for WebEx when he moved into a business development position at Affymetrix. To train and communicate with the company's partners who develop software around the Affymetrix platform, Lelivelt adopted WebEx Event Center. In addition, Event Center enables Affymetrix to leverage its existing partner network to educate and sell to prospective customers. "Because our software analysis partners provide key products from which our customers analyze and use Affymetrix data, it is critical for us to help market these software tools to our customers. Event Center enables us to educate and inform our customer base in a distributed, scalable, and cost-effective manner. Plus we can share leads that are generated through these events with our partners," he says.

Customer presentations feature Affymetrix development partners, giving clients exposure to a large selection of genomics software vendors at once. "Using WebEx, we recently had one of our partners make a presentation directly to our customer base. We're still educating our market, and WebEx lets us leverage all our resources quickly and effectively," remarks Lelivelt.



To promote WebEx events and make them accessible to as many attendees as possible, Affymetrix utilizes WebEx built-in features. “We list the events on our website and newsletters and let WebEx do the rest,” says Lelivelt. The Affymetrix website links to the WebEx registration interface, enabling participants to sign up directly for events. WebEx also automatically generates pre-event reminders, further facilitating event promotion. “On the day of the event,” says Lelivelt, “we conduct the first session using WebEx VoIP. Then we repeat the same presentation using the telephony capability within WebEx.” He adds, “WebEx enables us to deliver the same content at the appropriate time for each region of the globe—and use the right technology for each audience.”

Lelivelt records the sessions and hosts them on the corporate website for on-demand viewing. “We don’t have to worry about which media player a customer is using,” he says. “Downloading is seamless, and the recorded sessions provide tremendous value to us and our customers.” Affymetrix now uses recorded sessions to enhance its technical product documentation, such as user manuals and guides.

As part of its marketing activities, Affymetrix also uses Event Center to support its 25 partner vendors better. The company records live demos of its partners’ software products, then hosts these recordings on the corporate website. “This gives our customers the ability to see how our partner software works with ours. Plus, the recordings serve as a powerful marketing tool for our partners,” says Lelivelt.

Once Lelivelt introduced WebEx into Affymetrix, the solution rolled out across

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the enterprise in an organic way. “When employees experienced how easy and effective WebEx was to use, adoption grew quickly,” he says. Today, the majority of employees in the company use WebEx Meeting Center for a variety of purposes, including internal and external training.

#### The Benefits

Affymetrix can now deliver communications cost-effectively to a geographically dispersed audience, broadening the company’s market reach. With WebEx, Affymetrix seamlessly brings together a global community of development partners, customers, and employees. Lelivelt says, “WebEx provided Affymetrix with scalable communications. Now we can deliver a consistent message to a variety of audiences and reach more people.” In addition, WebEx keeps production and material costs at a minimum. “WebEx significantly reduced the amount of technical documentation we need to produce. As we build our library of WebEx recordings, the need to develop user documentation will continue to decline,” explains Lelivelt.

WebEx has also expedited information delivery between Affymetrix and its partners. “The production times on WebEx events are very short. Now we can roll out product launches more efficiently,” says Lelivelt. “And we can deliver technical notes to our development partners in weeks instead of months. WebEx enables us to bring products to market faster.”

Using WebEx has also improved the quality of Affymetrix communications. Lelivelt says, “WebEx helped us improve knowledge retention among our partners.” For example, Lelivelt recently developed a series of events that grouped new product content into seven distinct presentations. “Now we focus on creating content that’s more manageable for us to deliver and easier for our partners to learn,” he says.

#### The Future

The smooth integration of WebEx at Affymetrix has resulted in significant communications improvements, and the company will continue exploring the full capabilities of the WebEx solution. “We plan to use the new Event Center Audio Broadcast feature to stream audio simultaneously through the computer and the telephone, so customers can choose how they listen to our communications,” says Lelivelt. He also intends to use more of the editing functionality within WebEx—possibly evaluating the WebEx On-Demand module—to create even more polished pre-recorded presentations. In addition, Affymetrix would like to integrate WebEx with Salesforce.com to accelerate lead generation and processing. Lelivelt concludes, “WebEx has changed the way we work, closing communication and geographic boundaries between us, our customers, and our partners. We look forward to leveraging WebEx in new ways.”

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Affymetrix required an easy-to-use remote support solution to provide seamless technical support to customers worldwide.
- WebEx Meeting Center easily deployed across customers’ computers and made support calls more effective.
- Affymetrix has broadened its market reach, delivering communications to geographically-dispersed audiences via WebEx.
- WebEx Event Center shortens information delivery cycles so Affymetrix can bring products to market faster.