

Streamlining Training Management

A Vendor-Provided Case Study



Mountain View, California

viewcentral.com

CCITRIAD is a major force in the automotive aftermarket and hard-lines, lumber, and agribusiness industries. The company, headquartered in Austin, Texas, has a rich 30-year history of leading its markets with innovative management information systems, data, and services. The CCITRIAD system offerings are enhanced by extensive information services featuring highly specialized database products, as well as customer support and maintenance services.

Prior to 2001, CCITRIAD was using an expensive and inefficient 1-to-1 training model. It was becoming increasingly more time-consuming and costly to deliver the customer training that's important to the company's continued growth. It realized that it urgently needed to try a new approach in order to more effectively train its more than 15,000 customers. The company's goal was to move from its legacy of a 1-to-1 training model to a 1-to-many training model so it could benefit from the economies afforded by new technologies.

The move began with the implementation of PlaceWare, a Web-conferencing application that lets multiple customers attend an online training

In a Nutshell

Need

- Cut time and cost to deliver customer training.
- Move from a 1-to-1 training model to a 1-to-many training model to benefit from the economies afforded by new technologies.
- Create user-friendly online registration for mostly nontechnical training customers.

Solution

- A supplier whose products would integrate easily with other providers' Web-conferencing applications.
- An expanded curriculum via virtual conferencing technology.
- A comprehensive pre- and post-event management system.

Results

- Fast integration of provider's solution, leading to quick return-on-investment.
- Seamless training management.
- Proactive marketing of training to targeted customers.
- Reduction in participant no-show rate.
- Improved analysis of the training function.
- Three-day process of activities associated with training program reduced to two clicks.

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course simultaneously from any Web browser. That new learning environment enables live online instructor-led learning as opposed to the asynchronous, self-paced, page-turning approach, which wasn't well suited to CCITRIAD's environment.

CCITRIAD does still offer a few face-to-face or telephone-based training courses, but most of its training is now done through virtual events. Customers appreciate the ability to take an expanded curriculum of courses that they can attend from the comfort of their offices.

As CCITRIAD began to depend heavily on virtual conferencing technology, it quickly realized that it also needed a comprehensive pre- and post-event management system, in addition to the Web-conferencing technology, that would allow it to optimize its training business. CCITRIAD began searching for a solution with strong financial and business capabilities to address the need to automate the management of training events. It also wanted a solution that would integrate easily with Placeware and other providers' Web-conferencing applications.

Choosing a supplier

CCITRIAD selected ViewCentral to manage and automate the activities associated with its training program, including real-time scheduling, advertising, registration, payment, communications, follow-up, and reporting.

The company offers 80 to 90 training courses at any given time, so scheduling the different trainers, facilities, and additional resources had been a lengthy manual process. Adding, revising, and updating courses often took two to three days. Now, that process can be done immediately in as few as two clicks. Resource management can now also be done instantly with maximum efficiency and zero wait time. The ViewCentral solution lets training managers publish and update their own class schedules directly without IT or Web-developer involvement.

Because the ViewCentral solutions are tightly integrated with PlaceWare, it's possible to optimize CCITRIAD's Web-conferencing licenses, which are used by several departments throughout the corporation. Previously, it wasn't possible to reserve licenses for training

events; trainers had to negotiate with individual internal users to ensure that enough licenses were available for each event. Now, trainers can reserve licenses for each event and immediately detect any potential conflicts. In short, the enhanced resource management capabilities are helping the company maximize its Web-conferencing resources.

Serving customers

Most of CCITRIAD's training customers are nontechnical, so the online registration process had to be user-friendly. Customers embraced the completely Web-based course registration and can now view an up-to-date schedule of all available classes, with complete course descriptions and the number of available seats displayed in real time.

ViewCentral's solution also provides a seamless way to manage Web-based training delivery by tracking and displaying prepaid training credit balances and by accepting credit card payments at the point of registration. CCITRIAD is also able to upload transaction data from its back-office applications, thus

reducing the effort to manage training commitments.

The communications engine lets the company stay in touch with participants through the ability to send multiple course reminders on different dates and at different times. Currently, it sends a reminder with course-specific information 10 days before the scheduled start date. Another reminder is sent the day before and includes materials attendees can review in preparation. A popular feature lets registrants sync course dates, times, and information with their Microsoft Outlook calendars to help ensure a high rate of attendance.

CCITRIAD is now able to remarket more proactively by inviting targeted customers to appropriate courses. Prior to the new technology-based solution, participant data was unavailable to the training team. Now the team can systematically notify relevant and past participants when new or additional courses are added. It can also market advanced courses to those who have completed primary courses in similar subject areas. The communications engine also helps reduce the “no show” rate by keeping learners informed and excited about upcoming courses. It includes a link to each participant’s profile and a course cancellation policy at the bottom of every email reminder.

“Our goal is to significantly reduce the ‘no show’ rate,” says Richard DePasquale, director of education program development. “We know that customers are reading their email reminders because they’re contacting us if they’re unable to attend.” The solution also helps increase attendance because seats that would go vacant can now be easily filled.

Business analysis

In the past, it was difficult for CCITRIAD to perform meaningful analyses. Everything from training credits to number of attendees to “no shows” had

to be analyzed from information gathered manually from spreadsheets, emails, and other disparate sources. The new solution automates that process and provides detailed reports that allow analysis and improvement of the training function.

In addition, CCITRIAD can drive continual improvement in training courses through direct learner feedback captured in automated post-event evaluations. The capabilities allow measurement for effectiveness of the trainer, course materials, class design, and registration experience.

Fast benefits

The ViewCentral solution was implemented in less than one month and integrated seamlessly with CCITRIAD’s existing PlaceWare application. The new solution enables a single-user interface to set up courses in both environments, so there’s no duplication of effort with the Web-conferencing provider. CCITRIAD’s training site has retained the look and feel of its corporate Website. That ability to present the provider’s solution with the CCITRIAD brand was important to the company.

“We’re a software company ourselves, so our expectations for automated solutions are high. ViewCentral has met our challenges and, in some cases, exceeded our expectations with 20- to 30-day turnarounds on major enhancement requests,” says DePasquale. “This has been huge for us. We’re optimistic about the directions we can go. We’ve just begun to use the solution and hope to exploit all of its capability.”

CCITRIAD plans to build training tracks—sets of courses that learners can register for, and in some cases take, before they receive their systems. That’s just an example of the changes planned to enable learners to get a quick start and begin enjoying the benefits.