

SOLUTIONS

Selecting a Web-Conferencing Provider



NMHG provides global training to its dealer network with Encounter.

About NACCO

NACCO Industries is an operating holding company with three principal businesses: lift trucks, housewares, and lignite coal mining. The subsidiaries consist of NACCO Materials Handling Group, NACCO Housewares Group (Hamilton Beach and Proctor Silex products), and North American Coal Corporation. NACCO employs more than 12,000 people globally and reported revenues in 2002 of US\$2.5 billion.

NACCO Materials Handling Group designs, engineers, manufactures, sells, services, and leases a full line of lift trucks and service parts marketed worldwide under the Hyster and Yale brand names, as well as under the Yale and Sumitomo Yale brands in Japan.

The mission of NMHG is to be the leading supplier of lift trucks products while meeting the expectations of its external and internal customers. The mission of NMHG's aftermarket training department is to provide dealers with training that will assist their aftermarket sales and support staff to provide product and service solutions for its customers.

A vendor-provided case study on business solutions that might meet your needs and help you refine your training purchase decisions.

NACCO Materials Handling Group's Aftermarket Training department provides both classroom and online training for its dealers. Its classroom offerings range from intensive four-day sales schools for aftermarket sales representatives to two-day operations seminars that target inside parts sales specialists. As a supplement to its classroom training, NMHG provides online offerings ranging from interactive distance learning Webcasts to online certification programs. The aftermarket training department also supports eight training schools.

Kim Lynch is a member of the aftermarket team of 20 that supports the global dealer networks. As an aftermarket training developer, Lynch is responsible for developing presentations and Internet-based training for dealers in both North and South America. Her presentations range from PowerPoint and Flash to online testing applications. Lynch is also responsible for four Webcasts per month with attendees from eight to 60 sites participating.

Because aftermarket training is considered a valuable service by the dealers, NMHG needed to find an easy-to-use, reliable Web-conferencing service to accommodate the online component of its training. Lynch evaluated a number of vendors, then selected one. She quickly discovered, however, that the conferencing solution provided by this company was difficult for the dealers to use, and NMHG was unable to secure dedicated numbers. The cost for the

service was higher than anticipated, and the provider didn't have the ability to record or archive NMHG presentations. Another issue Lynch had was that call management consisted of the Web-conferencing company having an operator on the line to run the call. After trying to use the provider's services for several months, Lynch decided that she had to find a better solution to NMHG's Web-conferencing needs.

Managing calls from the desktop

"In addition to our frustration over management of the calls, each time we scheduled a conference call we were given a different toll-free number," Lynch says. In turn, she had to publish that number for all of the dealers. If anyone at NMHG had to reschedule or change, he or she would be given yet another conference number to dial. "It was a hassle to have different numbers each time we hosted a Web conference. We also realized that we wanted to reinforce learning and reach users who couldn't attend. That called for the ability to archive our conferences—a service this vendor didn't provide," says Lynch.

After receiving an emailer from Encounter, Lynch contacted the company. She received a demo and was impressed with Encounter's management console, the ability to manage calls from the desktop, and Encounter's teleconferencing services. Encounter's Audio Control Panel provides a Webpage that integrates audio control into Web conferencing, providing presenters with all of the functionality of operator-assisted calls—without the expense. The intuitively designed Webpage enables conference call hosts to manage, monitor, and control calls. The ability to broadcast presentations over the Internet and

archive those presentations was important to Lynch. In addition, Encounter provides reports indicating who has participated in the calls—a feature Lynch found attractive because she bills the dealerships for employee training.

Another major reason NMHG selected Encounter is its customer service. “Whenever I have a question, I can easily get the info I need from either my account rep or someone at Encounter within the hour,” notes Lynch. The company addresses technical issues and keeps Lynch informed of new features and functions in advance. Lynch found that Encounter provided all of those services at a significantly reduced cost per minute than the first vendor she’d selected.

Validating conference services

As with many trainers, Lynch usually gets feedback only when things don’t go well. Since selecting Encounter, Lynch receives few complaints and no emails saying that a dealer doesn’t understand how to participate in the Web conference. “We ask for feedback at the end of each presentation, and I never hear that someone had a problem connecting or that the audio quality wasn’t good. My first slide is a Webpage, and I can add animation, graphics, and text,” says Lynch. She adds, “Our trainers are seasoned trainers, but not with conferencing. They’ve found Encounter easy to use.”

NMHG’s dealers now have an alternative to the time, cost, and lost opportunity associated with travel. “We couldn’t provide this type of training to dealers if we didn’t have this capability. The Webcasts are an excellent supplement to our classroom training,” says Lynch.