

Case study



Computacenter

Reducing costs with SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards

Computacenter is a leading European independent provider of IT infrastructure services, helping customers to maximise the value of IT by advising on IT strategy, deploying and integrating appropriate technologies, as well as managing elements of their infrastructures.

Computacenter has a vested interest in the sales of Steljes equipment, as basic equipment sales often lead to larger solution sales, services or both. Chris Hanson, Internal Sales Director at Computacenter decided to test out the SMART Board interactive whiteboard in his own corporate environment.

“Every child knows how to use an interactive whiteboard, but adults just don’t,” says Chris. “I wanted to see how easy it would be to introduce the boards into a business instead of a school.”

The relationship between the two companies led to a pilot scheme supported by Steljes. Computacenter’s goal was to see whether interactive technology would solve many of the common problems associated with running a business across multiple, disparate sites.

For the internal sales group, the challenges include vast amounts of travel hours and expenses, the geographic spread of each team, and the carbon footprint produced by flying multiple employees to different locations for what would often be very short meetings.

Chris heads up a team of 190 people across the country - it is inappropriate to bring the entire team together every day and waste valuable time that could be spent with customers. Chris’s team processes around 1,200 customer orders per day, thousands of quotations, so response needs to be rapid and interactive.

Challenge

To introduce a new way of thinking and operating to a major IT company that saves money and time, and contributes to a greener planet.

SMART solution

SMART Board interactive whiteboards and Bridgit™ data conferencing software that drastically reduce the need to travel to meetings in a company with 190 employees across the UK.

Result

Instant conferencing, less company mileage, a closer knit team and less paper wastage have all contributed to Computacenter’s efficiency.

Computacenter recognised the strength of interactive technology adoption in education and Chris decided to prove that it can be used in the corporate environment just as effectively. The Computacenter pilot began in May 2007 when Steljes provided three 600i SMART Board interactive whiteboard systems and SMART's Bridgit data conferencing software. One was placed in Chris's office at the Hatfield Head Office, another in the CRM room at the same site and the last at the London branch.

One of the many ways Chris uses the SMART Board is to chair meetings and interact with his staff across the UK and internally. There is an average of eight attendees from up to seven different locations taking part and the use of the board has removed the need to bring people to Hatfield.

In a move towards adopting a 'paperless' office, his team works on a central report for each of these meetings using the SMART Board – this is then saved to a server so there is no need for typing up, emailing, and printing. The team at Computacenter has to be flexible - even a gap of thirty minutes needs to be utilised. The introduction of the SMART Board and Bridgit software means that impromptu meetings can be arranged in a quicker and more efficient way. The Bridgit software makes it easy for users to connect to a conference, even through common firewalls. It takes less than 20 seconds to create and start a Bridgit software conference.

Computacenter also uses Microsoft Webex for conferencing facilities, but Chris Hanson sees the SMART Board and Bridgit as being easier to use in comparison; "I have the utmost confidence in the SMART Board and Bridgit solution, I know it works when I need it to. I can set up meetings without worrying that the technology will let me down. People seem more intimidated by video so I use the board when we need to get something done."

When Chris started his role at Computacenter, he calculated that he had spent 17 working weeks travelling in the first year alone, at an estimated 40,000 miles: "I was determined not to spend my life traveling, but still needed quick access to data. After the start of the pilot, my average annual mileage has now dropped to just 6,000."

The usage of the interactive whiteboards has grown organically through word of mouth across the company. Visibility of the benefits has cascaded into other parts of the business, with every department using it for different purposes including capturing diagrams and brainstorming. Because of this popularity, and as the SMART Board/Bridgit solution is already in commercial use, Chris estimates that he will need to formalise the programme soon, and take on more licenses to expand the facility internally.

For the tech-savvy user, getting started is straightforward, but internal roll-out will require some education. However Chris is convinced that company-wide adoption will deliver astronomical changes in productivity and a noticeable drop in travel time and costs. "After introducing this system my expenses dropped tenfold. You can imagine what the figures would look like if 4,500 employees all used the solution. If we rolled this out, suitable meeting rooms would need to be set up. Even though this would require an initial investment, the benefits outweigh the costs in every way."

With regards to creating a solution for its customers, Computacenter recognises the benefits this could bring to a business with a mobile workforce, across a wider geographic spread. In fact, customers visiting Computacenter who have seen the SMART Board in use, have gone on to purchase the technology. For the forward looking organisation, the future looks promising for SMART's corporate business solution.

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Chris Hanson, Internal Sales Director, Computacenter.

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is both the industry pioneer and global education market segment leader in easy-to-use interactive whiteboards and other group collaboration tools. The award-winning SMART Board interactive whiteboard is the most widely installed interactive whiteboard in the world.

Many school jurisdictions have standardised on the product, which is used to provide interactive learning opportunities and enhance student achievement in more than 450,000 classrooms spanning every U.S. state, every Canadian province, every Local Authority in the UK and in more than 100 countries worldwide. SMART products also include interactive pen displays, interactive digital signage, wireless slates and software. Using SMART products, groups can access and share the information they need to meet, teach, train and present. SMART's education customers include New York City Board of Education (U.S.), Oxford University (UK), Kobe City Board of Education (Japan), Barrier Public School (Australia), University of Ottawa (Canada), United World College (Singapore), Stephen-Hawking-Schule Neckargemuend (Germany), Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (U.S.) and Harvard University (U.S.).

SMART is a private company founded in 1987. Employing more than 900 people, SMART is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with assembly facilities in Ottawa, and offices in Bonn, Tokyo, China, New York City and Washington, DC. SMART has been issued and maintains a broad portfolio of patents with numerous U.S., Canadian and other patents pending. In 1992 SMART formed a strategic alliance with Intel® Corporation that resulted in joint product development and marketing efforts, and Intel's equity ownership in the company. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com.

About Steljes

Steljes creates opportunity for partners, customers and end users by pioneering innovative technologies that enable people to interact and communicate more effectively while working and learning.



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