



“Our remote support on WebEx provides the perfect tool for us to resolve customer issues whilst respecting confidentiality. Since we introduced the Support Session we have been able to control our spending on travel and use our manpower more productively, helping us to compete more effectively in the global manufacturing economy.”

– Lee Fowkes, Sales Support Manager, Pathtrace PLC

## Pathtrace gets an edge over competitors with WebEx Support Center for enhanced customer satisfaction



### INDUSTRY

High Tech – Software

### WEBEX APPLICATIONS

Meeting Center, Support Center

### SUMMARY

WebEx is used to provide customer support for Pathtrace's highly technical application, EdgeCAM. Providing high-quality support and consulting to its customers is a strategic initiative for Pathtrace Engineering Systems.

### ABOUT PATHTRACE

#### Line of Business

Computer aided engineering solutions

#### Headquarters

Reading, UK

#### Number of Employees

90

#### WebEx Customer since 2002

Pathtrace Engineering Systems is the driving force behind EdgeCAM, the world's most intelligent Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) system. With twenty years experience of CAM and hundreds of man-years of manufacturing expertise, Pathtrace provides innovative solutions to some of the toughest engineering problems. With offices in the US, UK, Japan and China – as well as a network of resellers around the world – communication between locations, staff, customers and users coupled with a first-class technical support network is paramount to the company's continuing success.

### The Challenge

EdgeCAM is a complete solution for milling, turning, advanced surface machining and solid modelling. It has more potential to add to a company's profitability than any of its competitors due to the high degree of CAD integration and flexibility in toolpath creation, providing increased productivity and rapid return on investment. The complex CAD-based applications in EdgeCAM mean that regular technical support, such as a traditional call centre or email support facility, would not meet the expectations of users and resellers.

Pathtrace identified that to keep a competitive edge over its rivals, it needed a first-class communications system in place. Lee Fowkes, Sales Support Manager of Pathtrace, explains: “We needed to provide our network of resellers with product training, support

and advice, as well as offering end-users a technical support service that was second to none.”

Previously, if a customer or reseller called with a technical query, Pathtrace Support tried to resolve the issue over the telephone or email. If a resolution could not be found, Pathtrace engineers would travel to the reseller or end-user locations. Pathtrace initially adopted Placeware's web conferencing application for its online remote support. However, they soon decided that they needed a higher degree of interaction than Placeware could provide and began a search for a new web conferencing product in order to meet their high-quality customer support initiative.

### The Solution

After a formal review process, WebEx was finally chosen as the communications partner for Pathtrace. With its high degree of collaboration and interactivity, WebEx Support Center provided an excellent solution to having interactive support meetings with customers and resellers located anywhere in the world.

With an emphasis placed on excellent customer support, Pathtrace developed a unique way to guide users through the complex intricacies of solids manufacturing. The integration of Support Center to the EdgeCAM application offers end-users unparalleled service levels comments Lee Fowkes: “When end users need guidance, they

can speak to one of our service Engineers at our call centre. If the issue cannot be handled simply over the phone with an explanation, our Engineer will ask the customer to click on Help > Support Session, an option offered inside the EdgeCAM application. From there, the customer enters a meeting number and then our Engineer can see the customer's screen and exactly what issues he has."

Pathtrace is able to conduct far more productive operational meetings, where staff are able to work on documents together and the web conferencing facility has streamlined the company's day to day business processes.

### The Benefits

With WebEx Support Center built right into EdgeCAM, Pathtrace has improved call resolution time, travel and productivity. With the ability to take remote control of the end-users desktop, Pathtrace engineers can see and resolve technical issues remotely without having to make a potentially time-consuming journey to the customer site. The time saved from not having to travel to individual customer sites has also given Pathtrace engineers the time to resolve more technical support calls in a day, and schedule in remote experts that would normally be difficult to get at to customer's location. With WebEx, experts can join a support meeting from anywhere via a simple connection to the internet and a telephone, saving travel costs and improving employee productivity.

An enormous benefit of Support Center is the true two-way interactive communication it allows. Pathtrace Engineers can take control of the customer's computer and resolve issues quickly. No longer having to have a problem described to them but actually seeing what the end-user sees eliminates a lot of the guess work involved. Fowkes explains: "We use Desktop Sharing, Remote Control and WebEx diagnostic tools to resolve issues without having to travel to a customer's factory. Our Engineers can help far more customers using WebEx than ever before. It offers

the possibility for an expert Engineer to help resolve issues, regardless of where he/she or the customer is located." Fowkes comments: "Many of our customers are in the Defense and Motorsport industries where confidentiality is paramount. Typically, they would never let a 3D CAD model outside of their organisation. Our remote support on WebEx is the perfect application for us to resolve issues whilst respecting confidentiality. Because WebEx is delivered over the proprietary Mediatone™ network, Pathtrace is also able to hold highly secure meetings with its end users and resellers."

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### The Future

The current limiting factor in Pathtrace's use of WebEx is that many of its manufacturing customers do not have internet access into their factories. However, as the availability of broadband connections increases, the benefits of the remote support provided via WebEx will become available to more and more of Pathtrace's customers.

Given the success of the Support Center integration into EdgeCAM, Pathtrace is looking into using WebEx for giving product demonstrations to increase sales revenue. Says Lee: "We are investigating the use of WebEx for remote demonstrations using a 3G connection, so called "mobile broadband". This could allow our Sales Engineers to visit clients and use their notebook PCs to start a WebEx session with an expert EdgeCAM engineer, whether he is in the office, working from home, or located in another country. Currently 3G coverage is still patchy and expensive in the UK, but we expect this to grow over the next few years and provide more opportunities for us to expand our reach."

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Pathtrace is using WebEx Support Center to ensure high levels of customer service
- Using WebEx Support Center, Pathtrace engineers remotely guide users through the complex intricacies of solids manufacturing by seeing their screen and understanding their product issues first hand
- Use of WebEx has grown organically and now 20% of staff are regular users