

MINDJET TEAMS SEE EYE TO EYE



with GOTOMEETING WITH HDFACES



MINDJET CMO
JASCHA KAYKAS-WOLFF

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Jascha Kaykas-Wolff CMO
www.mindjet.com

Mindjet, a 300-person global software company headquartered in San Francisco, California, helps professionals visually and collaboratively manage information and tasks. Mindjet software is currently used by more than 3 million people around the world. Beginning in 1998, the company set the standard in non-linear brainstorming and planning methodology, known as “mind mapping.” Today, Mindjet has extended its focus to mobility and the cloud, providing solutions that dramatically improve how people can work together and accomplish goals.

The challenge: enhancing collaboration across a global organization

According to Jascha Kaykas-Wolff, Mindjet’s chief marketing officer, “How we operate is pretty typical for a global company. Everyone is receiving tons of information every day — whether it’s emails, phone calls or notes passed around the office. One major challenge was taking this information out of silos, out of disparate locations both offline and online, and moving it to a place where we could interact with it together, across different offices, countries and time zones.”

A related challenge for the company was trying to capture the effectiveness of the in-person, real-time collaborations of a decade ago, when people met in the same room or at least spoke on the phone. However, with employees located all over the world and frequently traveling, even scheduling phone calls can be very difficult.

Kaykas-Wolff continued, “Our marketing team instituted an agile marketing practice, specifically a version of scrum, a methodology that includes a daily stand-up meeting where each participant answers three questions: What did I do yesterday? What am I doing today? What roadblocks do I have? It’s very important to hold this team meeting every day in the same physical space without fail. Because we are a distributed team, we needed a solution for bringing everyone together face to face no matter where they were located.”

He added, “I believe there is nothing more important to business success than communications within the company. The ability to see people and interact with them face to face is often critical.”

Implementing GoToMeeting with HDFaces video conferencing

In 2007, Mindjet began using Citrix GoToMeeting to connect its global workforce via live web conferencing. The company was specifically interested in the ability to provide high-definition video conferencing for small group meetings without the need for expensive hardware or video systems. Anyone with an Internet connection and a webcam can use GoToMeeting and get HDFaces video conferencing at no additional cost.

For the Mindjet marketing team, holding the daily stand-up scrum meeting is integral to their agile process. GoToMeeting with HDFaces allows team members to use smart phones and tablets, as well as laptops and desktops, to join the session using the device they prefer — or the one that’s



GoToMeeting
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close at hand. Kaykas-Wolff explained, “I can use all the tools at my disposal, whether it’s my iPhone, iPad or laptop, to participate in a GoToMeeting collaboration.”

Mindjet staff use GoToMeeting with HDFaces for other collaborations, such as weekly public relations meetings. According to Parker Trewin, director of global communications, “Our global PR team can interact on agenda setting, status updates, planning and launch preparation. It’s an in-person meeting experience with a shared workspace, and it makes us feel much more connected.” Product teams are also frequent users of GoToMeeting.

In addition, Mindjet implemented Citrix GoToWebinar to conduct large-scale marketing webinars. Previously, the company had used other tools, including WebEx, but experienced issues with pricing, usability and lack of functionality. “Our costs were climbing,” said Sasha Kipervarg, director of global IT. “We were already using GoToMeeting successfully, so we adopted GoToWebinar and found it was easier to use and provided more-attractive pricing.” Up to 500 people register for these free, educational webinars, which are offered up to 30 times per month.

Frequent communication is the key to a productive Mindjet culture

Continually improving communication and breaking down cultural or technological barriers within the company are critical for the business. That is why Kaykas-Wolff and other Mindjet executives are champions of transparency, even though sharing freely opens the door to the risk of failing in a very public way. He said, “We have a rule here in the company, which is, ‘Fail. Fail fast. Fail often. Just don’t fail the same way twice.’ Having the freedom to be transparent about all that’s happening, to expose failure when it does happen but to not let it happen twice in the same way becomes a big cultural eye-opener for the company. It allows people to be comfortable with trying different things. As a result, like many innovations, sometimes great things happen because something else has failed right before that.”

GoToMeeting with HDFaces supports transparency by increasing the engagement and participation of all attendees. The ability to see people’s facial expressions and body language not only enhances communication, it also helps to avoid multi-tasking and distractions that mitigate the team’s effectiveness.

Solving multi-generational communication challenges

An invaluable benefit of GoToMeeting with HDFaces for Mindjet is the ability to facilitate collaboration across different generations with different technology preferences for communications. Kaykas-Wolff noted, “For the first time in history, there can be four different generations of people in the same workplace — pre-Baby Boomers all the way to Millennials. And every one of them, while not being stereotypical, has a very specific set of ways that they work. Millennials will often be a lot more casual – their first choice is a digital meeting environment. Gen Xers, like me, prefer



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Key benefits

- * Promotes a transparent work environment
- * Facilitates communication across generations
- * Connects global teams face to face

to go sit back in the office and fire emails to everybody. The Boomers and the pre-Boomers may prefer to use a notepad and to schedule a meeting and talk on the phone.” He continued, “It’s OK to have all these different workstyles in one organization. The challenge is figuring out how to facilitate great communications across these different styles. I believe it’s about making sure that people are in the same room, whether physically or virtually, and can see each other in the same meeting to share and work through ideas. GoToMeeting with HDFaces makes this possible.”

Working in a more agile, transparent and collaborative environment

GoToMeeting with HDFaces enables Mindjet’s global teams to envision and develop new products and bring them to market faster. Kaykas-Wolff noted, “Technology like GoToMeeting with HDFaces allows us to brainstorm well, plan better, and to communicate with each other in a very efficient way, every single day, while we’re looking at each other.”

He concluded, “Every company goes through the process of creating ideas. These ideas have to be shared, and then become a plan to be acted against. With GoToMeeting, we’re better able to share the ideas, the plans and even the things we’re going to execute against with everybody, inside and outside our company.”

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