

SkillPath Seminars

At home on the leading edge

If you're looking for leading-edge training in

in everything from administrative support, to software skills, to social media, SkillPath Seminars is the organization to call. Founded in 1989, SkillPath has become the premier provider of business training in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where they deliver an impressive 20,000 different "how to" sessions in 500 cities annually.

About SkillPath Seminars

- *Leading provider of business training, with a portfolio of more than 350 topics presented at approximately 20,000 professional development sessions annually*
- *Operates in over 500 cities across the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*
- *Over 10 million trained since 1989*

Customer Needs

- *Foster simple, spontaneous, cost-effective multimedia collaboration to help maintain SkillPath's high level of productivity and competitive advantage.*

Solution Components

- *Mitel® UC360™ Collaboration Point*



Powering connections

"We've trained over 10 million people since the business was founded," says Jason Spainhour, the company's Director of Information Systems, "with a couple of thousand events held each month."

Clearly, that kind of success doesn't come from sitting comfortably on the trailing edge of anything. Doing something better than anyone else means being highly productive. It means building and keeping an advantage over the competition. And, in an organization where communication is what it's all about, it means staying on the leading edge of telecommunications. That's exactly what SkillPath has done, and continues to do, with the help of Mitel.

SkillPath and Mitel – a rich, time-tested tradition

SkillPath and Mitel go back a long way. "I've been here almost 15 years," says Spainhour, "and Mitel technology was in place when I started. We've been through three major phone system upgrades in that time, and each time we've looked at other options. We keep coming back to Mitel because of the quality of the products, the quality of the service, and their reliability."

"We've been in this industry for a long time, and something this game-changing doesn't come along very often. For Mitel to be on top of it and us to be using it is pretty exciting stuff."

- *Jason Spainhour*
Director of Information Systems
SkillPath Seminars

Among other Mitel products, SkillPath uses the most current version of Mitel Communications Director (MCD), which is at the heart of the Mitel Freedom Architecture. They also enjoy the unified communication and collaboration provided by Mitel Applications Suite (MAS), including Mitel Unified Communicator® Advanced (UCA) and Mitel NuPoint Unified Messaging™ (UM). And in their busy contact center, Mitel Contact Center Enterprise Edition directs call traffic.

Results

Continuing leadership. SkillPath continues a tradition of staying in the forefront of productive telecommunications.

Cost-effective collaboration. Rich, multimedia collaboration at a fraction the cost of traditional solutions.

Easy and spontaneous collaboration. With Mitel UC360 Collaboration Point in the personal office meeting space, collaborating is as easy as making a phone call.

Future proofed. SkillPath is positioned to benefit from ongoing advances in multimedia collaboration that will continue to drive its success.

But today, the conversation centers on their newest Mitel acquisition. It's called Mitel UC360 Collaboration Point, and it's something that Spainhour is very excited about.

Mitel UC360 Collaboration Point

Imagine what it would be like if your organization had only one telephone for every 50 or so employees. When you needed to make a phone call you'd book a "telephone room," and then wait for your scheduled "audio collaboration."

As absurd as that sounds in an age when business takes place at the speed of thought, and telephone communication is spontaneous and ubiquitous, it's what most organizations do when it comes to multimedia collaboration – it's scheduled, and it takes place in a meeting room that always seems to be booked when you need it the most.

Realizing this, customers have asked Mitel for a tool that makes cost-effective multimedia collaboration less planned and more spontaneous. Mitel has responded with a first-of-its-kind device called Mitel UC360 Collaboration Point, which combines in-room presentation display and multiparty audio and video collaboration for remote participants, all in a single compact appliance.

Far less expensive than traditional conference room multimedia solutions, designed for the personal office meeting space, and featuring a friendly and intuitive touchscreen interface, UC360 turns multimedia collaboration from a scheduled event into something as easy as making a phone call. So it's no surprise, given their history of staying on the leading edge, that SkillPath is one of UC360's earliest adopters.

UC360 at SkillPath

When asked what was involved in setting up SkillPath's two UC360 units, Spainhour describes it as straightforward. "It was very easy to get it operational," he says. "In 10 minutes at most, with distractions, I had it up and running. I gave the second unit to our system administrator who set hers up just as quickly. There's just very little involved."

Spainhour says that using UC360 is just as easy. "It's really close to a zero-learning-curve device," he explains. "There's a two-sided Quick Reference Card with a few pictures on it and a brief explanation of its features. It's got a home button. It's got a back button. Volume control and mute are obvious. You click on an avatar to find the person you want to call, and then click to make the call. And there's an icon for desktop sharing, so it's pretty darned intuitive."

Spainhour's UC360 unit is located in his personal workspace, so he no longer has to book special facilities to engage in multimedia collaboration that includes face-to-face interaction, document sharing, and presentations. "All you've got to do to present is share a desktop, or bring slides on your thumb drive, or go to Dropbox or another sharing site in the cloud, and you're ready for whatever topic you're meeting about," he says.

Although Spainhour sees potential for using UC360 with customers for training purposes, SkillPath's main focus when it comes to their new device is communication with fellow employees and partners. "Our Mitel authorized PARTNER has a couple of UC360 units in service," says Spainhour, "and we've used it to communicate with each other. It makes for more 'real life' communication, because you get the expressions, the body language, all the nonverbal clues that you don't get on a traditional phone call and that you do get in person."

Spainhour is sure these benefits will prove to be invaluable when it comes to collaboration between SkillPath's headquarters and its call center. "We have a remote call center located about a hundred miles from our main office," he explains. "The VP in charge of that center is in our main office, and his manager and supervisor are both up there. I can see a definite use case for our head office and call center people to talk to each other 'face to face,' as it were, with UC360."

The importance of that kind of "face to face" collaboration is clear to Spainhour. "With a lot of communication – whether it be email or a traditional phone call – things get lost without the visual component, and things can be misunderstood. So any device that helps you not make mistakes when it comes to peoples' meanings or intentions is good. I can easily see it paying for itself by averting even one mistake in the right place at the right time."

An interesting aside takes place when Spainhour explains that, for his in-room video display, he's using a High Definition projector with his UC360. "It was the easiest thing to get quickly off the shelf when I was setting up," he explains. It highlights the fact that UC360's open-standards interface and SIP compatibility mean it integrates easily with existing infrastructures, leaving users free to choose their own components and to communicate with a wide range of different devices, including Mitel and other PBX deployments, video solutions, and computing environments. "The flexibility of being able to use different components is nice," says Spainhour. "Typically, when you buy an all-in-one solution you kind of get locked into certain hardware that you don't necessarily want, and that's not the case with UC360."

A vision of the future

Although still in the early stages of discovering the benefits of their new UC360 Collaboration Point device, SkillPath's Spainhour can see great possibilities ahead. "We're excited about the potential that UC360 represents," he says. "You just sit down, log into your network, and collaborate. It becomes second nature. You're not reaching for a different device. It's just there. When you make a phone call, you just tap a couple of buttons, and you're engaging in multimedia collaboration."

Comfortable with leading edge technology, and experienced at evaluating emerging communications trends and products, Spainhour recognized the unique nature and potential of UC360 right away. "We've been in this industry for a long time," he says, "and something this gamechanging doesn't come along very often. For Mitel to be on top of it and us to be using it is pretty exciting stuff."

About SkillPath

SkillPath has grown to become the premier provider of business training in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. When the company was launched in 1989, SkillPath offered 82 seminars. Today, SkillPath delivers annually more than 20,000 "how-to" sessions to over 500,000 people in 500 cities. Since joining forces in 1995 with Graceland University, their dedication to providing quality training has never been stronger. SkillPath's unique brand of training enhances skills, saves time and money, and contributes to career and organizational success.

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