

# case study

## Nortel Networks

Live Internet Collaboration Trains  
Nortel's Sales Force and Support Staff  
Cost-Effectively

### Solution Overview

#### Industry — High Technology

#### Challenge

Develop and deliver training in shorter time frame, while reducing costs

#### Benefits

- Deliver customized, cost-effective new product training for customers
- Allow subject-matter experts to lead classes and interact with participants around the world without leaving their offices
- Improve sales productivity by delivering training remotely

#### Solution

Saba Centra Live

Nortel Networks, Inc. is one of the world's leading suppliers of networking products that serve corporate enterprises, service providers and telecommunications carriers.

"This industry never slows down," Steve Henry explains. "At Nortel Networks our whole product structure changes every 6–12 months, so training is critical to keeping employees and customers informed." In the coming year, Nortel Networks plans to train 40,000 U.S.-based employees and customers. The challenge is to develop and deliver training in much shorter time frames, while reducing costs.

**“ When we do competitive training, we can actually take participants to competitors’ Web sites or to Nortel Networks’ Web site to find and review detailed product and company information. ”**

Ralph Fowler, Instructor  
Nortel Networks

"Most companies today are focused on the costs associated with training, travel and lost productivity," Henry says. "We looked at Web-based tools as alternatives to formal stand-up classes and meetings. We chose Centra Live from Saba, because it allows our subject experts to lead classes and interact with participants around the world without leaving their offices."

Centra Live software enables large, geographically dispersed groups of employees and business partners to talk to each other and subject-matter experts, while sharing applications and multimedia content live over a single network connection.

#### Focused Training Programs Increase Productivity

Nortel Networks is using Centra Live to deliver new product training to employees throughout the United States. According to Henry, Centra Live is enabling Nortel Networks to provide customized training based

on audience requirements. The material can be modularized from eight hours to a series of half-hour segments, meeting specific audience needs.

“We’re grouping information into modules so employees can attend only the sessions that specifically pertain to their job,” said Henry. “This allows us to provide very specific messages. For example, if we are introducing a product for the financial market, we can provide those modules only to the sales representatives selling into that market.

“Our employees are very busy people, so time is of real value to them,” Henry explained. With Centra Live, Nortel Networks trains participants remotely, so sales representatives do not have to leave their offices. “They do their two-hour session, then get on with their work,” Henry said. “This is a far more productive way to train than putting dozens of people on a plane and taking them out of the office for a week.”

The feedback from Nortel Networks’ employees at the end of a Centra Live session is extremely positive. They like being in their office and participating in an expert-led event. They like being able to exchange ideas with each other and engage in group discussions by passing control of the microphone back and forth. They are impressed with the ability to raise their hands, ask specific questions and get answers right away.

Nortel Networks’ workshops average 10–12 participants simultaneously logged in via their corporate intranet. Sessions cover key selling points such as product features, competitive positioning and customer benefits.

“You don’t get salespeople’s attention for very long,” Henry said. “Their focus is on selling the product. When they train, they want a nice crisp overview of the technology and the product, positioning information and the sales strategy, and then off they go.

“I think the key factor is that employees are learning within the context of the office,” Henry continued. “Centra Live doesn’t disrupt their lives by requiring them to fly hours to a formal classroom for days of lectures on everything from A to Z. With Centra Live, they get the specific information they need to do their jobs.”

### Centra Live Incorporates All the Interactivity of Live Environments

Ralph Fowler, a Nortel Networks instructor who led the initial Centra Live sessions, finds that Centra Live is as effective as classroom training and makes better use of his time. “I like Centra Live,” said Fowler, “because it dramatically reduces the amount of traveling I need to do, and it has all the communications features and functions I use in a classroom.”

Centra Live integrates multiway audio conferencing that facilitates group discussion. It includes live interactive application sharing for product demonstrations and hands-on experience, a collaborative whiteboard and breakout sessions.

“Centra Live’s interactive component is very strong,” explained Fowler. “We can answer participants’ questions in detail, acknowledge an employee raising their hand and use the whiteboard to review diagrams or highlight key points. Centra Live also includes features that allow participants to tell us if we are pacing the session appropriately — if we’re going too slow or moving too fast.”

Fowler sees real benefits from Centra Live’s Web Safari™ feature, which enables participants to explore Web sites during the live session: “When we do competitive training, we can actually take participants to competitors’ Web sites or to Nortel Networks’ Web site to find and review detailed product and company information.”

Nortel Networks’ topical experts and session developers use PowerPoint to create the initial content. Centra Live supports standard multimedia formats, including PowerPoint, video, computer-based training (CBT) or any material in HTML. Centra Live Agenda Builder™ lets anyone quickly import and sequence new and existing materials into Centra Live’s online collaboration environment.

“Centra Live brings important training to market much quicker,” Henry concluded. “We use Centra Live for all Nortel Networks’ training requirements, from human resources to customer training. It saves an enormous amount of time and reduces expenses.”