

Chapter 1

What's a WebEx?

In This Chapter

- ▶ What, exactly, is WebEx?
 - ▶ Understanding the Web-based nature of WebEx
 - ▶ Running through the various WebEx meeting applications
 - ▶ Discovering how people use WebEx applications
 - ▶ Taking a first look at what WebEx has to offer
-

We've come a long way from the first meeting, which probably occurred when a few cavemen sat around a fire discussing the pros and cons of hunting saber-toothed tigers. We've replaced their grunts with sophisticated language (sometimes several languages in a single meeting). We've found ways to visualize our ideas with whiteboards and bullet point presentations. Companies have utilized all sorts of technologies, from conference phones to video conferencing, in search of the perfect meeting.

Yet for most of us, there are still a few obstacles to effective meetings. Organizing a meeting can be a nightmare in itself, with a wide variety of schedules and locations to accommodate. The cost of getting to and from a meeting, both in terms of time and travel expenses, can be prohibitive. If a meeting is held on the phone or even online, concerns about security and reliability ("Hey, Johnson just got disconnected . . . again!") abound.

Enter WebEx. WebEx offers a comprehensive suite of Web meeting applications designed to improve collaboration and increase your productivity. Simply put, WebEx has found solutions to many of the problems you face in setting up and hosting meetings. The solutions work for any meeting, from a handful of people holding a spontaneous problem-solving conference across the corporate campus, to a CEO delivering a report on corporate profits to 3,000 employees located around the world.

Look, Ma, No Software!

The first thing you need to understand about WebEx solutions is that there is no box to open. Customers simply access WebEx applications with a common Internet browser. WebEx offers a set of applications, and those applications are Web-based. That means you access your meeting online. So if you're on the road, you can tap into the meeting as easily as the nearest Internet connection. It also means that you don't have to do much of anything to set up and maintain your WebEx applications, and you don't have to fool around with hardware to deliver a presentation (which beats having to fool around with connecting your laptop and that darn overhead display thing like you did at the last Dallas sales conference, huh?).

It's Not Software . . . So What Is It?

WebEx has developed a comprehensive suite of Web meeting applications because not all meetings are alike. It offers you a very flexible approach to purchasing one or more meeting applications that make sense for your business. WebEx's Web meeting applications are designed to fit a specific meeting need, such as running a medium-sized project meeting, launching a global marketing event for thousands of people, or holding a one-on-one customer support session. You can mix and match the applications you need, and add new ones at any time. You can even customize your meeting applications to, for example, sport your own company logo in every meeting.



You can take the plunge and get a whole slew of these applications by buying WebEx Enterprise Edition. This includes Meeting Center, Sales Center, Training Center, Event Center, and Support Center in a single, easy-to-deploy interface for the company with a broad range of meeting needs.

Taking a look at all WebEx has to offer

Using WebEx, you can expand the reach of everybody in your company, from Jack the CEO to Jill the sales manager, to tap the potential of real-time collaboration.

WebEx currently offers the following Web meeting applications (what you have available depends on what your company buys):

- ✓ **WebEx Meeting Center™:** This is for those garden-variety meetings that make up so much of our work days. From project or team meetings to impromptu brainstorming or troubleshooting meetings, this is where you'll conduct your business on a day-to-day basis. You can see a Meeting Center meeting in progress in Figure 1-1.

- ✓ **WebEx Event Center™:** This is specifically designed for larger scale events, which can easily involve thousands of people in diverse locations. New product introductions, strategic business announcements — anything that requires that you really make a splash — work great in Event Center.
- ✓ **WebEx Training Center (see Figure 1-2):** Do you want to supercharge your training programs with an online component? Does your training require you to set up hands-on computer labs, register students for a training session, hold interactive discussions, or demonstrate how a software product works? If so, you need Training Center.
- ✓ **WebEx Sales Center:** Looking to get an edge over the competition? Using Sales Center, salespeople can improve their win rates by holding sales calls online.. Here you can demonstrate applications, share presentations, bring in experts on the fly, and discreetly view the whole meeting from your sales prospect's point of view.
- ✓ **WebEx Support Center:** With desktop control, remotely resolving technical problems is a snap. Hold one-on-one meetings (or one-on-one plus experts you call in to help out) with customers or employees to troubleshoot problems and provide personalized assistance.

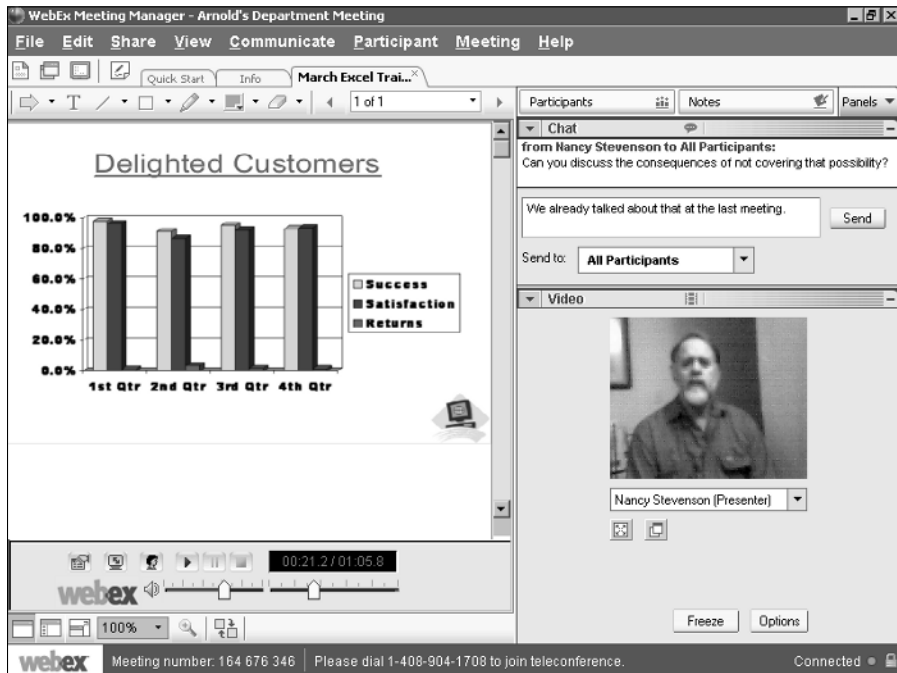


Figure 1-1:
A Meeting
Center
meeting in
action.

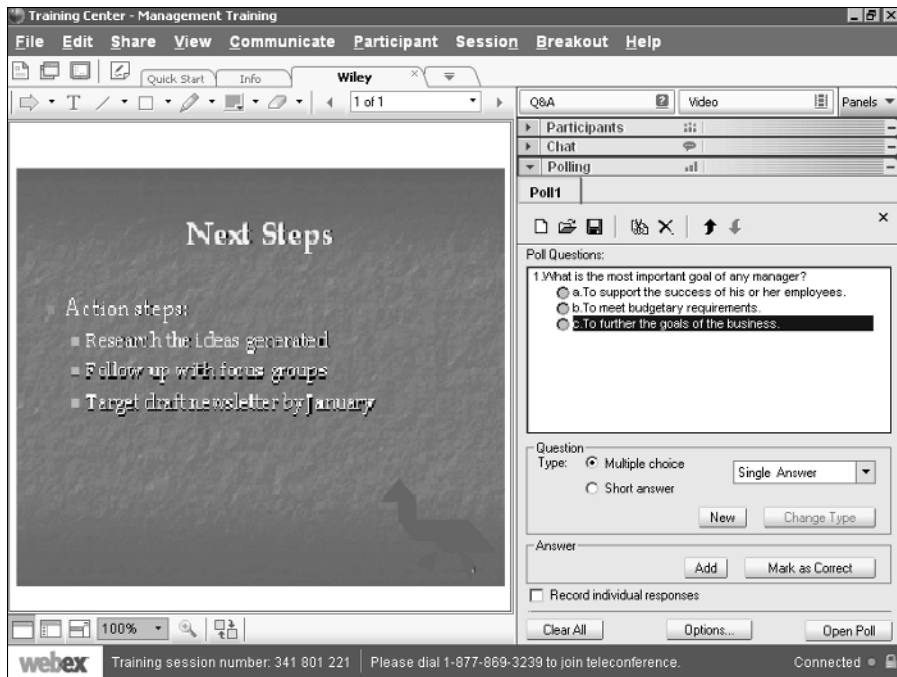


Figure 1-2:
Training via
WebEx.



One thing you'll get used to as you get familiar with the service is that WebEx calls different meetings different things. You hold meetings in Meeting Center and Sales Center, run events in Event Center, and hold sessions in Training Center and Support Center. I may refer generically to *meetings* in some places in this book, but when I get into the meat of a particular application, you'll discover the appropriate lingo.



Do you have to buy a bunch of services to simply meet online? No. You can get your feet wet with the WebEx Pay-Per-Use service, which allows you to hold meetings as you need to and be charged one at a time. See Chapter 2 for more about Pay-Per-Use.

What do you get?

Each meeting application offers different features. But, on a broad level, here's what the various WebEx solutions provide:

- ✓ Tools for scheduling meetings, including Instant Meetings and One-Click Meetings for initiating meetings on the fly. You'll learn more about these in Chapter 4.

- ✓ An online meeting environment (see Figure 1-3) with features for sharing files, giving sophisticated multimedia presentations, interacting with attendees, annotating presentations, incorporating video, recording meetings, and even sharing Web pages and applications. Chapter 7 gives you specifics about many of these features.
- ✓ A secure, reliable network based on a platform called WebEx MediaTone™, which supports a full range of real-time data, audio, and video communications in several languages. You discover more about this technology and how it does what it does in Chapter 2.
- ✓ Tools to help run a meeting (there's even an eject feature to get rid of that uncooperative attendee — there's one in every bunch), poll attendees to check their understanding of material or get their input (see Figure 1-4), and generally ensure that everybody has a productive, pleasant meeting experience.
- ✓ A centralized command center called My WebEx™ (see Figure 1-5) where you can configure settings, view all the meetings you have scheduled and their status, and generate reports about your meeting activities.

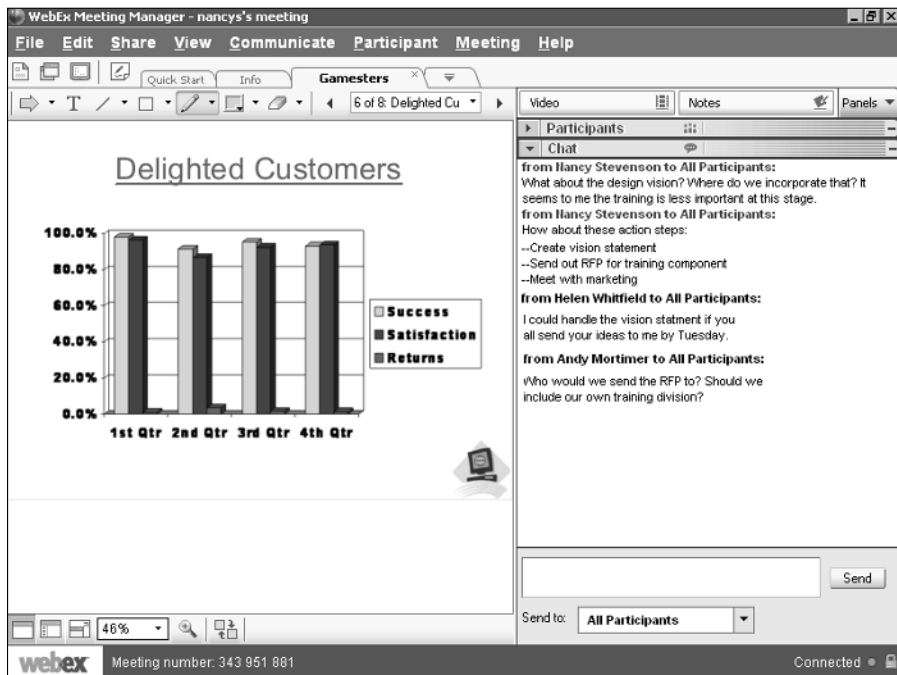


Figure 1-3:
A WebEx
meeting in
progress
(shown in
the
Macintosh
environ-
ment).

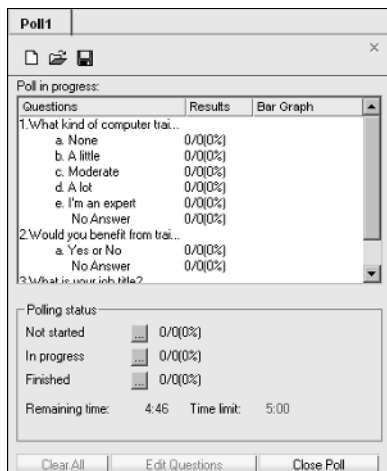


Figure 1-4:
The polling
feature in
use.



Figure 1-5:
My WebEx
is a
personal
online
space with
all you need
in a single
location.

What do you have to do?

Though you can add some bells and whistles, here's essentially what you need to make use of most WebEx meeting features:

- ✔ A computer (desktop or laptop) or wireless device with an Internet connection.
- ✔ The WebEx client downloaded to your computer (this takes seconds to do and is pretty much automatic; I take you through it in Chapter 4).
- ✔ A connection, which can be either through a WebEx teleconference (see Figure 1-6) or an Internet Phone connection using something called VoIP (which you'll hear more about in Chapter 4).

A Plethora of Multimedia Communications Options

Great. So WebEx provides all these tools for online interaction and communication. But just what are people out there doing with the service?

Just about anything you can imagine, actually . . .

Putting meetings in their proper places

WebEx began with a focus on online meetings, so meetings are a lot of what people use WebEx for. But meetings can mean different things to different people.

With the WebEx solution, you can

- ✔ **Hold events with up to 5,000 attendees in Event Center.** Think annual meetings. Think new product announcements to a global customer base. Think of informing your employees that you've just been taken over by a huge conglomerate. WebEx Event Center supports this type of enterprise-wide event.
- ✔ **Call impromptu meetings on the fly with the Instant Meeting feature.** Meeting Center, and Training Center offer this instant option, and all centers offer a One-Click Meeting option you can run to enable you to launch meetings quickly from your desktop or even Office software. This quick access to meetings or sessions is great for brainstorming, solving problems across time zones, or announcing a shift in project priorities that requires quick action.
- ✔ **Use integrated audio to keep conversations flowing.** Take advantage of integrated audio services to monitor and control audio activity from within the WebEx meeting environment. All WebEx Web meeting applications are available with your choice of audio services. Choose toll or toll-free global teleconferencing (see Figure 1-6) with call-in or call-back options or VoIP.

- ✓ **Run meetings that involve people in geographically diverse locales.** These may be training sessions for employees in three or four countries, for example. You can easily share files and document your ideas on a whiteboard during a sales meeting with international customers. In fact, anything you can do in a face-to-face meeting can be done in a WebEx meeting or session (except passing around the coffee and donuts).

Presentations with an attitude

Meetings may get lots of people talking, but for those times when your meeting is more of a presentation, you'll be glad to hear that making presentations is easy with WebEx Meeting Center, Training Center, Sales Center, and Event Center.

With WebEx presentations, you can create multimedia-rich presentations with PowerPoint animation and transition features with high-speed streaming of multimedia. This simply means that you can fly slides in from the right or left, twirl bullet points around in space, and add neat special effects without painful glitches and delays on the user's computer. Figure 1-7 shows such a presentation in progress. (By the way, Chapter 6 provides some wonderful tips for building great online presentations.)

Figure 1-6:
The WebEx
integrated
audio
services
within a
meeting.

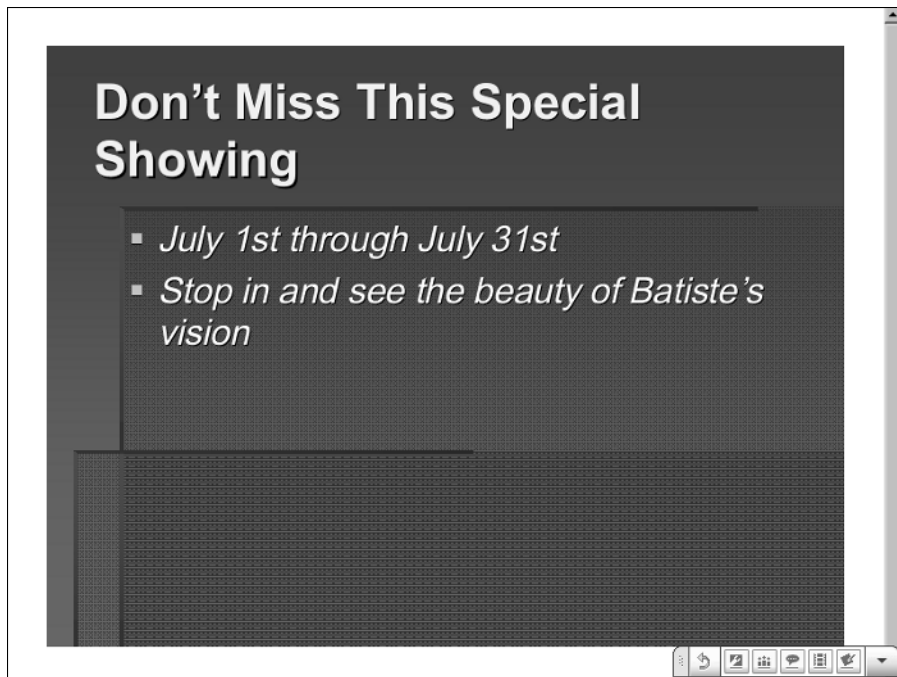
The screenshot shows the WebEx Meeting Center interface. At the top, the 'webex' logo is on the left, and 'Meeting Center' is on the right. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: 'Welcome', 'Meeting Center', 'Event Center', 'Sales Center', 'More Services', 'My WebEx', and 'Log Out'. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with expandable sections: 'Attend a Meeting' (containing 'Browse Meetings', 'Unlisted Meeting', 'Register'), 'Host a Meeting' (containing 'Schedule a Meeting', 'My Meetings', 'Instant Meeting'), 'Set Up', and 'Assistance'. The main content area is titled '3. Teleconference Settings' and contains the following options:

- Internet phone: ☒ No, ☐ Yes
- Teleconference: ☐ None, ☒ WebEx teleconferencing (for 125 or fewer callers)
 - ☐ Toll, ☒ Toll-free
 - Use teleconferencing location:
 - ☒ Allow access to teleconference via international local call-in numbers
 - ☐ Attendees call in
 - ☐ Attendees receive call back
 - ☐ Other teleconference service

On the right side of the settings area, there is a vertical list of steps, each with a numbered circle and a label:

- 1 Required Information
- 2 Date & Time
- 3 Teleconference
- 4 Invite Attendees
- 5 Registration
- 6 Agenda & Welcome
- 7 Meeting Options
- 8 Attendee Privileges
- 9 Review

Figure 1-7:
A Power
Point
presentation
in Full
Screen view
helps you
make your
point.



Sharing things

One of the great strengths of the WebEx experience is the ability to share things, from single documents to your whole desktop. This makes an online meeting truly interactive.

Here are a few ways that you can share in a meeting (but remember this will vary depending on which WebEx Center you are using):

- ✓ **Allow attendees to browse the Web with you and explore Web sites you direct them to.** You might acquaint your customer service people with the online ordering process on your own Web site, or have your Web design and marketing people explore the competition's Web sites together to get ideas about how to differentiate your site, for example.
- ✓ **Enable attendees to share an application without having it installed on their computers.** What a great way to demonstrate your new software product to customers or train employees on a new data-processing system!
- ✓ **Share your customer's desktop so you can troubleshoot a setup problem in a support session.**



See Chapter 7 for information about both shared browsing and shared applications.

Getting Started

I could describe a football game to you all day, but unless you've seen one, you don't really know what the experience is like. In the same way, now that you have an idea of what WebEx's suite of applications is and what you can do with it, it would probably help you to jump right in and play around with it.

WebEx offers an amazing array of ways to get into the WebEx experience and lay the groundwork for using the service. These guys practically hold your hand through the entire experience of learning about their services and setting up your first meeting.

Attending a demo

One of the best ways to experience WebEx is to go through its online demo (see Figure 1-8). Go to www.webex.com and click the Join the Live Demo link. You'll be greeted by a real live host who demonstrates just what a WebEx meeting is all about. Ask questions or just sit and watch — it's a low-stress, user-friendly process, and you can duck out whenever you need to.

Experiencing the free trial

Are you the type who thinks nothing worthwhile is free? Well, in this case, you're wrong. If you want more time one-on-one with WebEx, you can try the free, 14-day trial. You get unlimited online meetings for up to three people for two whole weeks.

You can also use various support and training features, as well as the Meeting Assist feature. Meeting Assist gives you the services of a WebEx support person for 20 minutes as you run your first online meeting. You can use this help during a live meeting, or, if you want to do a dry run instead, your WebEx helper will spend time one-on-one to get you up to speed on the WebEx meeting environment.

Just follow these steps to sign up for the free trial (did I mention that it's absolutely free?):

1. **Go to www.webex.com and click the Take the Free Trial link.** A sign-up form appears. You can also find a link here to sign up for the free trial of Support Center.
2. **Enter your name and e-mail address and click the Register for Trial button.** An additional form (see Figure 1-9) appears.
3. **Enter information in the fields in the Tell Us About You and the Tell Us What's Important To You areas and click the Submit Registration button.**

A message appears explaining that an activation e-mail has been sent to you, directing you to the demo, and informing you that you also get one free Meeting Assist session to help you learn the ins and outs of running a WebEx meeting.



Reading this book is, of course, your best bet for discovering all about WebEx (she said modestly). But if you're documentation-happy, WebEx provides quite a bit of help on its own. When you sign up for the free trial, take advantage of the links on the confirmation page that appears. They include a Quick Start Guide, User Guide, and Guide to Successful WebEx Meetings. There's even a How Do I? link that takes you to free online tutorials about setting up and running meetings.

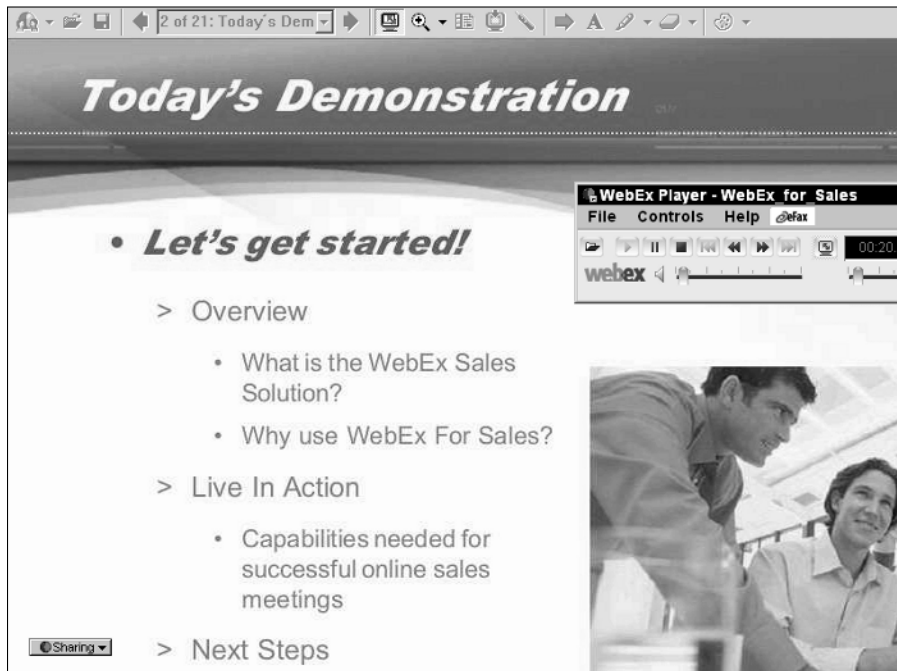


Figure 1-8:
The WebEx
demo.

Web Conferencing, Video Conferencing and Online Meeting Services JOIN DEMO | TRY WEBEX | BUY WEBEX | SEARCH | 1

webexTM Host a Meeting > | Attend a Meeting >

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Contact Sales, or speak with a WebEx representative about your subscription options:

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Your email address and personal information are confidential. See our [privacy policy](#) for details.

WHAT YOU GET:

- Unlimited online meetings
- Up to 8 people in a meeting
- Integrated Audio conferencing at no cost
- A Personal Meeting Assistant*
- Support and Training**

* Includes one free meeting assist with a personal meeting consultant to help you set up your meeting, prepare for the meeting and hand hold your attendees.

** Online training and web-based support provided.

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Figure 1-9:
 Registering
 for the free
 trial.

Performing a needs assessment

If you're interested in the possibilities of WebEx, you might want to contact one of the WebEx Solution Specialists. Go to www.webex.com/solutions/online-marketing-solutions.html and click the Solution Specialist link. Fill in information such as your

name, company, and the number of people who will use WebEx and with what frequency, and then click the Submit button. A specialist will contact you by e-mail to discuss your specific needs.