

Mrs. Fields Famous Brands, LLC

## Sweet success

Mrs. Fields Famous Brands adopts Adobe® Connect™ to build close-knit culture and expand global collaboration

Back when Debbi Fields—the original “smart cookie”—opened her first cookie shop in Palo Alto, California, it was easy to communicate the company’s values and how it was doing: she could hold an all-employee meeting in a single room.

Today, though, Mrs. Fields Famous Brands encompasses over 950 Mrs. Fields and TCBY locations around the world, run by hundreds of franchisees, which makes communicating the core values of the business and the latest developments both more important—and more complicated—than ever. As the company grew and hired Tim Casey as the new CEO, he made it his mission to connect frequently with employees, prospective franchisees, and established franchisees to instill the company’s values across this broader base of stakeholders.

### Engaging staff company-wide

Previously, bringing together top executives with field teams or having department heads engage directly with dispersed staff required frequent, costly travel. For instance, the CEO typically communicated to the field teams through team leaders and attended semi-annual departmental meetings that were held in Salt Lake City, Utah. And while these interactions helped strengthen the company, Casey wanted more and set out to enable staff across the company to engage more frequently in ongoing, higher-value interactions.

He decided to start face-to-face weekly meetings that included himself, the executive team, and 150 corporate employees across all offices and in the field. In addition to discussing any news, store activities, and business unit updates, he wanted the meetings to give employees, company-wide, the chance to talk about opportunities and events that were taking place in each of the company’s business units.

To meet this new requirement, Jana Kodel, development project manager, and Natalie Cooper, operations coordinator, began looking at online web meeting solutions, including Cisco WebEx, Citrix GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect, a richly featured web conferencing solution. “Adobe Connect was the only solution that could deliver multiple video options, enable employees to participate using mobile devices, and simplify my job by allowing me to establish persistent meeting rooms so I wouldn’t have to set new ones for each meeting,” says Cooper.

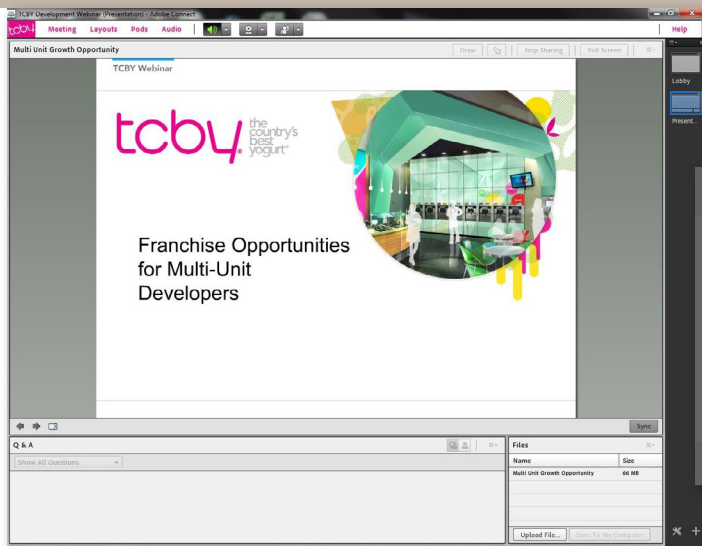


**Mrs. Fields Famous Brands, LLC**  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
[www.mrsfieldsfranchise.com](http://www.mrsfieldsfranchise.com)

**In partnership with:**  
**MeetingOne**  
[www.meetingone.com](http://www.meetingone.com)



Adobe Connect for Webinars provides Mrs. Fields and TCBY a powerful platform to communicate to prospective franchisees across the globe about ownership requirements—a critical aspect to the success and growth of the company. They can conduct polls, answer questions, and communicate the value and benefits of owning a franchise, enabling a closer relationship between franchisor and franchisee.



### Challenge

- Communicating frequently and interactively with dispersed corporate staff
- Building the business by attracting new franchisees
- Establishing trust, communicating, and affirming corporate values with existing franchisees

### Solution

- Easily support interactive Q&A sessions and a range of rich meeting content during online company meetings and webinars
- Enable and manage participation using mobile phones through MeetingOne's Integrated audio, and tablets through the Adobe Connect mobile app
- Manage large meetings with dynamic functions to filter out distractions by enabling the exclusive "mute all" feature with the MeetingOne integrated audio, and bring in experts on the fly
- Set up meetings quickly and record meetings to provide participants everywhere with easy, anytime access to meetings

Now, with Adobe Connect, all Mrs. Fields Famous Brands employees can participate in meetings from their laptops, mobile phones, iOS, BlackBerry PlayBook, or tablet devices. They don't need any training: single-click URL access lets them see and hear speakers and easily view Microsoft PowerPoint presentations, video, and other meeting content. At a recent meeting, for example, the company used Adobe Connect to show employees a commercial the company was preparing to launch, streaming in a separate window.

Virtually all of the 150 corporate staff attend live—or at least log on later to watch recorded meetings. With Adobe Connect, they enjoy nearly the same level of interactivity in recorded sessions as in live sessions. Hands-on components such as quizzes, simulations, links, attendee listing, and content available for download remain interactive in recorded meetings available for playback.

Feedback about the new meetings has been overwhelmingly positive: staff appreciates having frequent updates on activities throughout the company, which encompasses Mrs. Fields; TCBY; the Mrs. Fields gifting division; the branded retail group; and licensing for both brands. Plus, staff is excited about the opportunity to have direct access to the management team as part of online question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions. If employees are unable to attend a meeting, they can catch the recorded presentation at their convenience.

### Engage prospective franchisees

Communicating to prospective franchisees is critical to the success and growth of the company. To attract new franchisees, Mrs. Fields Famous Brands previously sent e-mails to prospects and had sales specialists call them directly, but could not provide a live, online forum for presenting directly to prospects.

Now, Mrs. Fields Famous Brands uses Adobe Connect to conduct quarterly public webinars. Prospects attend to learn the requirements for owning a Mrs. Fields or TCBY franchise, and the webinars have increasingly become more interactive, including informative and popular Q&A sessions. If an unexpected question comes up—such as an in-depth query about real estate issues or sales reporting practices—content experts from anywhere in the company can seamlessly take the question and upload supporting materials in real time.

Participation in these marketing webinars has increased dramatically. The first webinar had 20 attendees, but the most recent one had 179 registrants. At the same time, prospects from outside the United States are registering in increasing numbers, opening up exciting possibilities for the company's international business.

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Natalie Cooper  
Operations coordinator,  
Mrs. Fields Famous Brands

### **Establishing franchisee trust**

Building on its success with Adobe Connect, Mrs. Fields Famous Brands is looking to use the solution to expand webinars for franchisees. Part of the company’s commitment to strengthening its business is to become a better franchisor by establishing a closer connection between the corporate office and franchisees. A good franchisor/franchisee relationship demands not only clear communication, but also building trust, and Mrs. Fields Famous Brands executives know they can’t achieve this with a newsletter or messages delivered through regional managers. Franchisees need to see and hear from CEO Casey, but the reality is that he cannot always travel to every franchisee location or even to the 16 regional meetings that take place twice a year.

Adobe Connect will enable CEO Casey and other top executives to talk to franchisees “face to face” frequently, without the company or franchisees having to incur the cost and disruption of travel, time away from the office, or the logistics of securing a special venue. “From our teams being more informed and feeling more supported to better decision making at all levels, we’ve realized many benefits from using Adobe Connect,” says Kodel. “In addition, we’ve significantly reduced travel time and costs for busy managers, resulting in a \$30,000 savings for the company.”

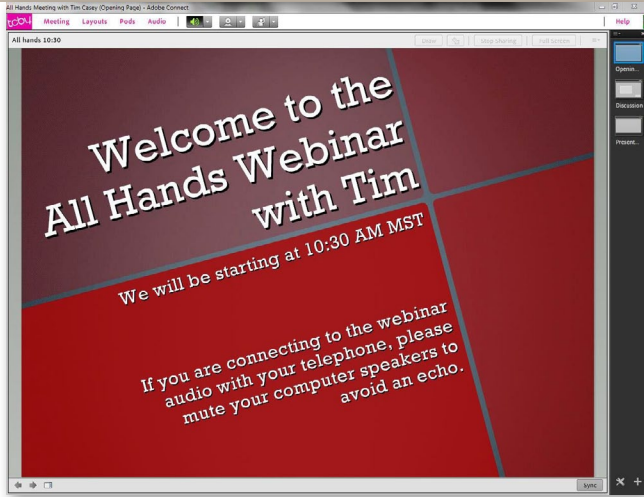
With Adobe Connect, franchisees won’t have to invest in hardware to gain access to the webinars. Just like Mrs. Fields Famous Brands’ corporate office employees, they’ll be able to reliably participate through their PCs, tablets, or mobile phones. And if they can’t call in live, they can still listen to the recording.

The proposed franchisee webinars will feature Casey talking about the business, explaining new developments, and sharing success stories that credit franchisees for their innovations. They will also include an open forum, seeking out franchisee suggestions and feedback on how the company can improve. Mrs. Fields Famous Brands further plans to leverage webinars to provide information, training, and recertification training for franchisees, to help ensure corporate consistency across all its franchises, wherever they are.

### **Maximum participation, minimal distractions**

The company selected Adobe partner MeetingOne to provide conferencing services that deliver the audio portion of the broadcast. “For us, MeetingOne was extremely easy to work with, as the sales team provided guidance through the sales and training process from day one,” says Kodel. Employees can use a webcam to participate and ask their questions for a more in-person experience. Because MeetingOne is tightly integrated with Adobe Connect, Cooper finds that it’s easy to set up meetings, manage participant audio controls, and record meetings for future use.

With Adobe Connect, Mrs. Fields Famous Brands executives, employees, and franchisees in hundreds of locations can reliably meet to discuss the latest company strategies and business goals, as well as participate in interactive Q&As to get all of their questions answered.



*"Adobe Connect brings an immediacy and in-person feel to our meetings, which is what our employees, prospects, and franchisees need to succeed. We want to instill in them the trust and confidence that executives from Mrs. Fields Famous Brands are right there with them, talking with them and listening and responding to them in real time."*

**Jana Kodel**  
Development project manager,  
Mrs. Fields Famous Brands

#### Benefits

- Established more frequent and direct communication between executives and staff
- Improved outreach to prospective franchisees, dramatically increasing prospect pool
- Enabled more frequent "face-to-face" communication between executives and dispersed franchisees
- Facilitated building of trust, communicating of core values, and sharing of ideas between corporate staff, the field, and franchisees
- Saved approximately \$30,000 annually by reducing travel time and costs for region meetings

#### Toolkit

Adobe Connect for Webinars  
Adobe Connect for Web Meetings  
MeetingOne Integrated Audio Conferencing

#### For more information

[www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect](http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect)

Adobe Connect capabilities help Cooper stay in charge of the webinar experience. For example, while she appreciates chat functionality, it can be distracting depending on the types of questions being asked. To address that issue, Cooper puts up a Q&A section that only she can view as a moderator, so that she can answer questions without distracting other participants. To keep meetings running smoothly overall, Cooper uses role-based features to improve meetings for hosts and presenters, as well as to enhance the webinar experience for the audience.

Adobe Connect enables Cooper to manage participant privileges in real time, setting up host and presenter roles as needed so that she can let other experts within the company act as presenters and contribute seamlessly to address questions that come up. The webinar continues smoothly, even though different presenters may be contributing from different locations. Cooper also appreciates additional functionality that MeetingOne provides, such as a feature that lets her see who is on mute and who is not, which helps cut down on background noise during large meetings.

#### Being there—while staying here

Kodel says Mrs. Fields Famous Brands wouldn't have been able to make such extensive—and productive—use of online meetings without Adobe Connect. "Adobe Connect offered us exceptional functionality, manageability, and ease of use for a seamless and intuitive meeting experience," she comments, citing the ability to manage meetings, set up meeting rooms in seconds with custom templates, and adjust them on the fly.

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**Adobe**

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