

Technology Diminishes Travel

Visitors to Kumon North America are often impressed by the size of the company's territory. Canada, the US and Mexico are the 2nd, 3rd and 14th largest countries in the world with a landmass of about 22 million square kilometers. KNA has a network of 30 offices and three warehouses to serve the expanding number of Kumon Centers and student enrollment spread throughout this vast area. And, increasingly, technology is being used to make connections that once required expensive and energy-consuming travel.

nearby. In addition to ease and convenience, attending the franchise seminar online can be less intimidating for people considering a Kumon franchise. Coordinating the evaluation of candidates also creates opportunities for teamwork among the recruiters and local branch associates by bringing potential franchisees into the office for a required proficiency assessment. Travel, hotels, car rentals and the risk of "no shows" have all been reduced through the use of technology.



△ ESVP Kaz Kubo speaks with managers at KNA's Field Support Center and in distant offices using a video conferencing system.

Kumon Canada delivers one of its monthly meetings via the internet for Instructors in remote areas or for those who missed the meeting. Associates use a system called Adobe Connect where presentations are viewed online by the Instructors, while a remote mouse pointer is used to engage them as they together discuss slide content. The moderator, usually a Field Consultant, delivers the content in a webinar. Questions are submitted through the chat window or participants are unmuted and can ask a question verbally. These meetings are recorded on the server for later viewing and archiving. Sharing the monthly meeting content online has helped to disseminate important information to more Centers and Instructors.

At KNA's Field Support Center in New Jersey, all managers gather monthly to share information and ideas. These meetings are joined remotely by associates at Kumon Service North America, KNA's huge printing and warehouse facility in Kentucky, and by frequent guests from branch offices in the US and Canada. "We want all KNA managers to regularly share information about projects and ideas", said Executive Senior Vice President Kaz Kubo. "Including managers from outside of the NJ Field Support Center makes it easier to keep everyone on the same page."

In the US, franchise recruiters are responsible for multistate territories and numerous market areas within each state. While not replacing in-person franchise seminars, technology is helping supplement and scale franchise seminars by including candidates from throughout the recruiter's territory, rather than having potential franchisees wait for one to be held

To better coordinate business activities between offices in Monterrey and Mexico City, staff in Kumon Mexico hold monthly meetings using Skype. These meetings may also include Instructors located in remote areas, including task force groups.

Skype is used as a regular tool for internal meetings among staff in Mexico, reducing expenses, saving time and avoiding travel to distant locations.



Field Consultant Graham Lawton conducts a Monthly Meeting online with Instructors from the Toronto Central Branch Office. ▷