Deloitte Working Together *As One* With Google Wave

Deloitte.

AS ONE

At a Glance

What they wanted to do:

• Streamline team communications on large-scale projects
• Increase collaboration between teams located in multiple offices
• Make "sessions" – rather than documents – the go-to tool for information sharing
• Realize benefits of face-to-face conversations without incurring financial and time costs of travel

What they did:

• Used Google Wave in place of email to seamlessly collaborate on multiple project components, online and in real time
• Allowed team members to access project archives, decision processes, and evolving versions through Wave's "playback" capabilities

What they accomplished:

• Enabled collaboration – and cut travel costs – by having teams meet online rather than through physical meetings
• Accelerated project development and cycle time
• Ensured a single source of project information while keeping a lasting record of revisions

Business

With more than 169,000 dedicated professionals serving clients around the globe, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (Deloitte), is constantly looking for better ways for teams to improve processes and productivity.

Deloitte has invested in a major global initiative to study the way people interact in large organizations: the As One Flagship Project. This project has created a comprehensive way to understand the degree of organizational alignment required to execute strategy. As Deloitte CEO Jim Quigley explains, "Successful collective behavior requires individuals to see themselves as one group, to commit to a common purpose or set of goals, and to have a similar understanding of how they are to work together."

Challenge

The As One Flagship Project is a large-scale initiative with multiple "moving parts" needing to be tracked and managed. The project requires global teams to collaborate on key technical design documents, product specifications, trainings, and robust diagnostic tools. Team members wanted a way to make their work more efficient by communicating real-time, streamlining document-sharing, and allowing seamless collaboration.

The central As One team includes product managers, software developers, designers and key business executives, all of whom needed to provide input in the product design phase for a sophisticated software application. Previously, project management was facilitated by numerous emails, teleconferences, and costly in-person meetings. This resulted in unclear requirements, multiple redundant interactions, and long development cycles.
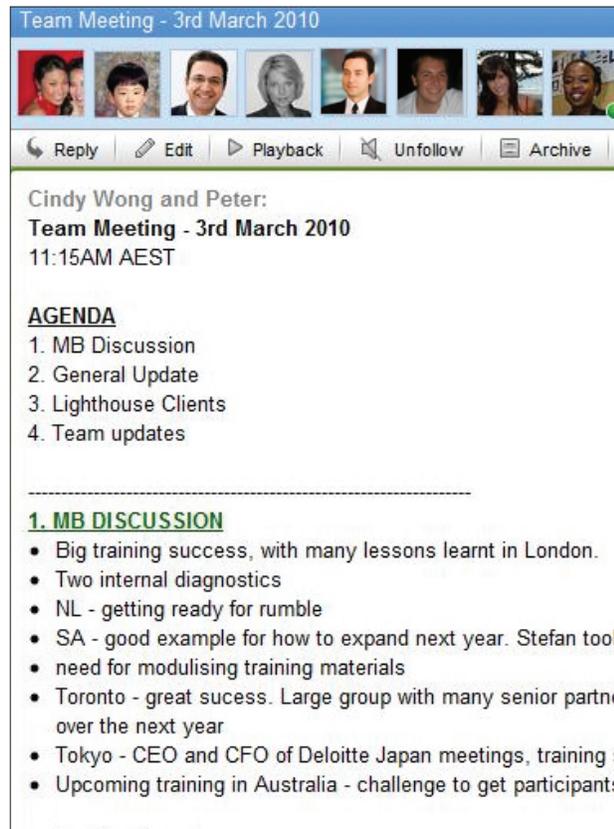
"We have achieved major time savings and greatly accelerated productivity by utilizing Wave. We're excited to grow alongside the Wave platform and to contribute insights back to Google so they can consistently make Wave more excellent for teams like us."
—Mehrdad Baghai, As One Flagship co-leader

The team faced some specific challenges:

• Co-workers in Sydney, Melbourne, New York, Toronto, and Tokyo needed to collaborate both in real-time sessions and on their own schedules

• Training was needed to support a global roll-out in the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, South Africa, and the U.K.

• Projects required careful sequencing, close collaboration, speedy consensus building, and quick turnarounds to get to the right decisions faster

• Travel expenses – time and money – were a major pain point. The team wanted all of the benefits of face-to-face interaction – but without the budget and time burdens implicit in team meetings

Global team meeting agenda

• Teams needed a "single source of truth" – a reliable way to get the latest version of the growing project document, while still having access to revision histories

The complexity of this process – numerous meetings, brainstorming sessions, planning activities, design and strategy reviews, and project management needs – made the Deloitte team wish for a new type of collaboration tool – one that could save time, ensure accurate version control, and dramatically increase productivity.

Solution

The team found the answer they were looking for in Google Wave. When Mehrdad Baghai, co-leader of As One, first heard about Wave, he had a strong feeling that it might solve his team's most pressing challenges. "I saw a great opportunity to get a large number of people to work effectively as one," he recalls. He started building some trial waves with a few team members, and tested the way it facilitated idea exchange, built collaborative documents, and allowed widespread input on key points across the global team.

The results convinced him – and others on the team – that Wave could accomplish what they had thought was impossible: creating a unified, "living" home for their team discussions, documents, and insights. The team enthusiastically dove in and began to collaborate using Wave.

Results

Using Google Wave has accelerated the project's development process by getting key team members to agree to, and codify, priorities and goals in a real-time online environment. With Wave, the team has been able to brainstorm, construct

requirements and specifications, facilitate agreements, and rapidly sign-off on specifications. "Consensus-building is faster and easier with Wave," Bagai reports, "In particular, the Wave 'playback' capability makes it easy to track the history of discussions and see how decisions were reached. This has significantly reduced time spent on project iterations."

Meetings notes, created in real time and permanently viewable to the team

One of the most powerful examples so far has been the production of collaborative meeting notes during conference calls with team members in multiple cities. The combination of a wave with the existing conference call has enriched the meetings as participants can see in real-time the notes of key discussion points, clarify and add ideas, and agree to next steps ensuring that everyone has a "single source of truth." By viewing the project wave during these calls, participants can see notes being captured and appended in real time. They can clarify points, add ideas, and agree to next steps, ensuring that everyone has that "single source of truth."

Versions of project files are easily viewable within the wave.

About Google Wave

A new web application allowing team collaboration and information sharing, with support for discussions, integrated media, and dynamic gadgets. Google Wave enables session-based collaboration that creates a lasting online record of collaboration, information aggregation, and project histories.

For more information visit:
http://wave.google.com

"The transformation in the quality of the meeting minutes has been remarkable. With Wave we get to the end of the meeting with a strong set of high quality notes that everyone has seen and signed off on already, removing the need for any additional effort afterwards. It is not just a huge time saver, but leads to much stronger outcomes."
—Jason Smale, As One Flagship team member

Wave's built-in voting gadget makes it easy to track opinions.

Team members who cannot make these calls can add comments to the agenda and vote – using an easy-to-add Wave gadget – on ideas before or after the actual call. Some participants sign into the wave while these calls are in progress, whether or not they actually listen in. Others take advantage of Wave's playback functionality to view precisely what happened during the meeting.

The As One Flagship team plans to continue working with Google Wave to increase team effectiveness. Throughout their global process, waves will replace hundreds of emails, repetitive or obsolete versions of project plans, and documents of meeting agendas and notes. As Baghai sees it, this is an exciting path. "Wave has helped us achieve major time savings and has greatly accelerated team productivity," he reports. "We're excited to grow alongside the Wave platform and to contribute insights back to Google so they can consistently make Wave more excellent for teams like us."