



Case Study
How Dow AgroSciences
Boosts Customer
Responsiveness

Grouputer helps Dow AgroSciences Australia boost teamwork and customer responsiveness to regain international market share

Key benefits

- Provides flexible online collaboration across regions and time zones
- Improves participation by team members during meetings
- Enables rapid, simultaneous idea generation
- Efficiently prioritises and develops action items
- Enables online customer presentations, application and document sharing
- Increases the frequency of customer communication and surveys
- Helps eliminate cross-cultural communication barriers

Dow AgroSciences Australia, part of the US\$40 billion a year Dow Chemical Company, is accelerating decision-making and helping to improve competitive advantage through the deployment of Grouputer online collaboration.

Developed by Sydney-based Grouputer Solutions, Grouputer is an online service that enables collaborative and enhanced decision-making. With just a web browser, it connects teams in disparate locations to develop and share ideas, documents, presentations, surveys and software applications in real time – or their own time.

The facilitator-managed software enables all participants to engage equally, to discuss and type issues, prioritise tasks, and develop strategies to improve business processes in training sessions, meetings, seminars and workshops, and achieve equal or superior results than in face-to-face meetings.

Dow AgroSciences Australia deployed Grouputer to improve communications during company and client meetings, such as encouraging team input and developing solutions for operational issues.

Challenges

Dow AgroSciences Australia forms part of a global network that researches and develops science-based agricultural solutions to control weeds, insects, and disease. It supplies farmers with crop protection and pest management products and information.

According to National Sales Manager Neil Comben, Dow AgroSciences Australia needed to encourage equal input from all team members and to develop solutions promptly during frequent brainstorming sessions.

“We operate a lot of teams and it can be difficult to get input from everyone,” Comben says. “It’s also difficult to come to a consensus when you are problem solving. The debate often goes round the room rather than resulting in a solution. It comes down to the facilitator making a decision: and that’s not always an objective decision.”

Dow AgroSciences Australia reaches the users of its products through its reseller network. “We wanted to be able to communicate directly with our distribution network, listen to their ideas and develop joint strategies for improving our business. We needed a way to ‘dialogue’ with a large number of customers efficiently and effectively.”

Solution

Dow AgroSciences Australia introduced Grouputer in 2004 to ensure equal participation from all members during sales and marketing meetings, to generate ideas quickly, eradicate facilitation filtering, and to efficiently prioritise and develop action items.

The software has proven beneficial particularly in brainstorming sessions with interstate participants. “There’s no filtering. Everybody types in their ideas and they can immediately see the ideas of the other participants, which can generate more thoughts,” Comben says. “It’s as if everybody is in the same room. You still get that group synergy.”

A major benefit is the ability to draw out ideas quickly, he adds. “If you normally ask 12 people in a room one question, you could have 60 possible ideas as a result. In a normal face-to-face meeting, it could take an hour to get those ideas out because people will often elaborate on each thought in detail. With Grouputer, you get an immediate dump of ideas. You are then able to go through the ideas quickly, theme them, vote and prioritise them within 10 or 15 minutes, issue minutes and immediately start implementation. This has accelerated our decision-making, thereby helping to improve our competitive advantage.”

Comben has used Grouputer to analyse customer feedback collected from a survey conducted prior to implementing the program. “We used Grouputer to identify areas for improvement and develop action items. We identified key areas to work on. Then we brainstormed action items, the timeline and made people accountable.”

Dow AgroSciences Australia has also used the system to meet with customers and discuss how the company could meet client needs better. Comben estimates Grouputer saved approximately \$4,500 for one client meeting alone.

“For a meeting with six customers where you would have had to fly them in, put them up overnight and run a focus group session, we were able to do it via Grouputer at the cost of a phone call.”

Dow AgroSciences Australia will continue using Grouputer in meetings, particularly brainstorming sessions, and intends to use it more extensively in client meetings to assess how it can improve the way it meets customer needs.

Dow AgroSciences also uses Grouputer to accelerate planning and implementation of Six Sigma projects. For more information about Six Sigma applications, please refer to the Six Sigma White Papers page at www.grouputer.com.

About Dow

Dow AgroSciences Australia actively researches and develops agricultural solutions to assist Australian farmers. Through an extensive network of internal and external experts, the company is working around the globe to develop and deliver the best possible products for local growers.



About Grouputer

Grouputer is a privately-held company providing e-meeting and e-learning tools for business problem solving, planning and training. The company launched the first-ever portable electronic meeting system, Decisions, in 1993. This empowered consultants, facilitators, and trainers to use technology to deliver on-site electronic meeting services to customers.

Since 2003, the company has focused on Internet collaboration between people meeting together in real time and anytime, in the same-place and remotely.

The company services customers in the United States, Latin America, Canada, Australia and Europe through direct sales and value added resellers. Customers include the Fortune 500, management consulting firms, universities and defence.



Grouputer Technology

Grouputer integrates web conferencing, group decision support, business management process authoring tools and people management features to enable complex decision-making, training and learning in either synchronous, asynchronous or blended sessions.

For Corporations

Grouputer is a knowledge creation technology that helps teams rapidly capture and leverage the knowledge of staff, customers and suppliers to create sustainable competitive advantage. Grouputer increases productivity by up to 500 percent and cuts meeting time by as much as 56 percent.

For Management Consulting Firms

Grouputer enables consultants to deliver superior service to customers in less time, increasing available consulting days and creating the potential to license their expert methodologies packaged and branded in Grouputer software.

Training and Learning

Grouputer enables educational institutions to deliver interactive, online learning to a broad spectrum of learners working together in realtime or anytime with or without an online facilitator/teacher.

How it Works

Grouputer is a highly secure, client-server application. To connect to a meeting, participants receive an automatically generated email with a url which starts the download of a one-time only setup file before meeting fellow participants online in the shared and persistent meeting space.

Facilitators are able to conduct online meetings in much the same way as they would if everyone was in the same room, including preparing the meeting in advance or on the fly.

For example anyone in the group is able to:

- Make a PowerPoint presentation
- View, share and edit documents together
- Brainstorm ideas, categorize, vote, prioritize and create action plan for decisions
- Conduct Surveys for customers and staff
- Train on software programs
- Troubleshoot remote computers
- Download written Reports of the meeting
- Conduct group web tours
- Receive automatic invitations
- Create custom business process methodologies such as Six Sigma, Process Improvement, Strategic Planning
- Use in synchronous or asynchronous modes and switch between both modes

For more information or to arrange a free demonstration contact:

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