

OUTSTART

CASE STUDY: OutStart Participate Social Business Software



Software Provider Implements Social Business Software for Collaborative Sales Enablement

THE CHALLENGE

A rapidly growing software provider had a number of sales enablement challenges:

- The account executives were frustrated by the inefficient email- and phone-based process in place that supported their requests for information they needed to close business.
- The organization had a document-centric sales portal that had many documents available to the sales organization. However, sales was looking for other employees' insight, ideas, and bits of information that would let them differentiate the company and its products from competitors. These types of information were often not available in the documents, and if they were, they were out of date.
- As the company grew, the sales team increasingly lost their ability to collaborate with each other and management to share their collective insight and experience. The company's subject matter experts within the Product Management, Product Marketing, and Pre-Sales Engineering departments were complaining that they spent too much time answering redundant questions. Overall, it was taking too long for corporate to communicate responses back to the account executives, which delayed the sales cycles and resulted in urgent emails and conference calls to obtain the information needed to respond to prospects' questions and RFPs.

THE SOLUTION

This customer selected the OutStart Participate solution to address these challenges. Collaborating with OutStart's Professional Services group, an implementation was rapidly configured and deployed to provide several key benefits:

Expert Collaboration

Account executives were empowered to efficiently collaborate with a pool of subject matter experts. The account executives interacted with Participate (online or through email) to ask questions, which were forwarded automatically to a pool of matching subject matter experts. This process enabled a rapid response and encouraged collaboration and conversation as needed through OutStart Participate. The approach offered two advantages over traditional methods:

1. It increased efficiency for account executives in getting responses.
2. It captured the collective insight of the enterprise more effectively, given that multiple experts received and were able to respond to each question. Additionally, the customer allowed account executives to register as experts as well, allowing them to share their own insights and significantly increase the organization's collective intelligence.

“The OutStart Participate solution had a 100% participation rate and yielded a 50% decrease in time-to-productivity for Field and Inside Sales Representatives.”

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Leverage Existing Sales Processes and Work Habits

A key Participate feature that assisted with user adoption was its capability to allow users to receive notifications from, and contribute content to, the platform via email. This created an efficient way for the sales team to receive or share knowledge without the need to regularly connect to yet another new tool.

Save Question-Answer Interactions for Future Reuse

By default, the interactions with experts and peers were captured as conversations and made available immediately for re-use by the rest of the Participate community members. This helped in the day-to-day selling efforts as well as response to many RFP's.

Create and Share Training Materials

In addition to allowing users to start or join online conversations, this customer also used Participate's ability to deliver training modules to create and publish formal training courses, e.g., assessments, training videos, playbooks, and best practices.

Enable Social Networking Features to Enable More Collaboration from Corporate and Executive Team

Using the Blogs feature, managers and executives posted quick updates to the sales team on topics ranging from product marketing and competition to updates from sales partners and the services organization.

THE RESULTS

The success of the OutStart Participate solution was measured based on quantifiable business results including:

- 50% decrease in time to productivity for Field and Inside Sales Representatives
- Improved win rates versus their competition
- 100% participation
- Subject matter experts across the team began received approximately two-thirds less emails and spent approximately one-third less time answering questions



Since the initial pilot, the customer has expanded its usage of the platform by proactively contributing answers, insights, and ideas to OutStart Participate that the subject matter experts felt would help the account executives sell more efficiently. In addition, several of OutStart Participate's social networking features, including the Expert Directory, Wikis, Blogs, and Microblogs, are fostering more cross-departmental collaboration and conversation.

About OutStart

You view knowledge sharing between your employees, partners, and customers as a strategic priority. Their knowledge leads to your success. OutStart's portfolio of inter-related mobile, social, and learning Knowledge Solutions accelerate and broaden access to colleagues and the knowledge they need to respond to business requirements more quickly and make better informed decisions. Together you excel. Recognized as a Visionary in Gartner's Magic Quadrant reports for the last seven years, OutStart is regularly acknowledged for its award-winning solutions including OutStart LCMS; Participate, social business software that integrates social networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing technologies; Hot Lava Mobile to develop, deliver & analyze high impact mobile learning; OutStart LMS, a full featured, configurable learning management system; and TrainingEdge.com an affordable learning & knowledge suite for the Enterprise the extends LMS and traditional elearning to support informal, social & mobile learning.

For insight into customer implementations, best practices, industry news and more, visit the OutStart Knowledge Solutions Blog, and follow us on Twitter @outstart.

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