

OUTSTART

CASE STUDY: OutStart Participate Social Business Software



International Organization Needed to Create a Collaborative Environment to Connect its Distributed Workforce

THE CHALLENGE

A government agency with a globally distributed workforce and volunteer network had three main collaboration challenges with its field offices:

- A global network of 70 field offices at times lacked timely support from agency headquarters due to geographical and infrastructural barriers.
- Due to government regulations that limited most staff to five-year contracts, there was a predictably high amount of staff turnover – and most critically, a loss of experience and insight that could be very helpful to their replacements during ramp up time, and to others who were faced with the same challenges.
- Some of these field offices were using variety of web-based platforms to collaborate, despite concerns about security and the inability to share this knowledge across the organization.

In response to these challenges, this government agency wanted to pilot a social business software platform to:

- Allow volunteers and employees to connect, interact and share with each other in a secure environment regardless of any geographical or organizational barriers.
- Easily identify and locate subject matter experts and collaborate with them in a virtual environment.
- Capture these conversations automatically so they are made available to others, and allow

peers throughout the enterprise to join the conversation, and contribute their valuable insight.

- Allow key individuals in the headquarters to monitor these conversations and contribute their perspectives as needed.
- Allow several of its key departments to create their own personalized and secure group collaboration areas.

THE SOLUTION

This agency chose OutStart's Participate because of its flexibility and broad set of capabilities. Working closely with OutStart's Professional Services group, it implemented a solution that met the agency's rigorous IT security standards while serving the collaboration needs of its most critical departments.

The social business software platform featured:

Conversations

It enabled on-line conversations for members to collaborate and share their experiences, ideas, and best practices 24x7, regardless of department, location or time zone.

Expert Network

Using Participate's built-in profiling and workflow features, the system routed questions to a selected network of subject matter experts based on predetermined rules and guidelines.

“Based on total pilot audience of only 500 users, the program achieved robust rates of user adoption, including more than 1,200 visits, 800 posts, and 2,500 reads.”

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Roundtable expert events

The organization could use limited-time events to allow staff in the field offices to connect and interact directly with the agency management.

Department Channels

These were used for several specific agency departments for targeted and secure collaboration among their team.

Dynamically Save and Reuse Content

All conversations were organically captured and made available to all members. The conversations included ideas, experiences, and insight that enabled the agency to capture the collective intelligence of its members.

Security and Confidentiality

The platform went through the agency's rigorous security and confidentiality certification process that is a requirement for all enterprise applications in this sector. customers during key product rollouts. Other activities in this phase included defining a User Interface that matched the customer's branding, and creating a program to recognize and encourage hyper-affiliate members to be an active part of the community and answer peer-to-peer questions.

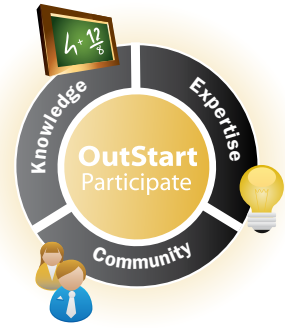
In support of this solution, OutStart's Professional Services organization worked with the customer and provided the following rollout and outreach services:

- Introductory promotional materials were drafted and sent to all pilot participants that included an overview of social software platform features and value.
- Web-based user training sessions were also held to provide more in-depth demonstrations of the system and answer user questions. These sessions were also recorded and deployed on the platform.
- Administrator training was delivered on-site to the agency to allow them to manage this platform going forward.
- Outreach programs were put in place to make sure the platform is used and has a large and active following.

THE RESULTS

Within the first month of launch, this agency's new social networking platform beat the customer's expectations, reaching the following benchmarks:

- Robust rates of user adoption including more than 1,200 visits, 800 posts, and 2,500 reads – based on total pilot audience of only 500 users
- Strong viral demand for this platform that frequently led users, outside of the official pilot audience, to ask the site administrator to participate after they heard about the platform from a peer.



- Creation of a historical knowledge base of ideas, opinions, experiences, and content that can be easily accessed by anyone with permissions, at any time, making all existing and new employees and volunteers much more effective than they have ever been

Based on success of this pilot, this agency rapidly moved forward with Participate into production and rolled out this platform to all of its users.

ABOUT OUTSTART

At OutStart, we're out to solve a big problem.

Most organizations possess a wealth of underutilized collective intelligence around their products, services, and processes. This underutilization negatively impacts employees, customers, and partners, costing precious time and money while hindering performance. Said simply, "what you people don't know will hurt you."

OutStart's social business software and learning systems act like a lifeline: connecting people to the know-how, creativity, and learning they require to be efficient, effective, and agile.

Since its inception in 1999, and backed by leading venture capital firms, OutStart has matured into a profitable and rapidly growing company with an impressive range of customers, who are surpassing their expectations and delivering exceptional business results. The company is honored to have customers like Autodesk, BB&T, Boeing Company, BT, CVS Caremark, DIRECTV, EDS, Internal Revenue Service, Lufthansa, McDonald's, MetLife, Prudential, TiVo, Australian Defence Force, U.S. Navy, UK Ministry of Defence, Verizon Wireless, and Yum! Brands.

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