

Case Study

GroupSystems Success Story: Global Media Conglomerate

Global Media Company Teams Spend Less Time in Meetings, Arrive at Decisions More Quickly

The media industry is all about delivering content. So when a global media conglomerate looked at enhancing its worldwide content management systems and processes, the major initiative called for ongoing collaboration among widely dispersed stakeholders.

“All we create is content,” said the program manager for content management. “We wanted to enable synergies across all business units to reuse content anywhere in a variety of formats. Education can reuse information or images from travel books or financial publications.”

Heightened Productivity in Virtual Meetings

The program manager spends a considerable part of his week preparing for meetings, leading them, and then assimilating all the resulting ideas and actions.

“With structured meetings comes a lot of work. I constantly need to bring together spreadsheets and Word docs and then consolidate and reconcile them. It used to take several hours” he said.

He and others leading the content management initiative have tried document collaboration tools, but none improved the quality or efficiency of meetings and ongoing collaboration. The company decided to trial ThinkTank® by GroupSystems, technology that facilitates brainstorming, decision-making, collaboration and virtual interactive meetings.

During the trial period, the media company used ThinkTank for a number of content management meetings. With the solution, attendees distributed across countries, states, offices and home offices came together virtually—either during scheduled meetings or contributing input over time using ThinkTank’s asynchronous functionality—with ThinkTank assisting with brainstorming, prioritizing and voting.

“The quality of meetings and information gathered went up a level the very first time we used ThinkTank,” the program manager said.

“ThinkTank helps us run projects more efficiently and increase the quality of ideas. We see more clearly the most viable projects to pursue, and it will contribute to higher-level strategic decisions.”

— Program Manager

Customer
Global Media
Conglomerate

Business Benefits of GroupSystems

- Faster consensus and decisions
- Meeting times reduced by 10-15 percent
- Post-meeting administration decreased from 1-2 hours down to 30 minutes
- In total, ThinkTank saves about 5 hours a week, or \$500 worth of staff time.
- Higher-quality ideas

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Expediting Consensus and Decisions

ThinkTank's prioritization capabilities help the content management teams pinpoint the most value-added projects and reach consensus more quickly. The Rank Order Vote feature enables staff to prioritize preferences not just by majority vote, but also by those that are broadly acceptable to the group.

When selecting a vendor, content management stakeholders used ThinkTank to collect feedback from about 15 team members on vendor proposals. The project manager created five questions to help drive a decision. "We were able to choose a distinct winner rapidly and then get the vendor in more quickly to meet tight deadlines," he said.

ThinkTank also streamlined pre-planning for an annual strategic kickoff meeting. Beforehand, the program manager ran a report from previous meetings to identify projects by priority. "In the past, we ended up skipping some of the most important topics because we were out of time. ThinkTank kept us focused, moving forward and able to talk about the most value-added projects."

Asynchronous Collaboration

ThinkTank also enables the company's distributed group to contribute their input to a project over time—resulting in higher-quality collaboration.

"Allowing the team to provide input asynchronously over a week gives people the chance to collect their thoughts, and frees them to contribute their opinions without worry about disagreements," the program manager said.

Likewise, the option of anonymous brainstorming further encourages team members to share ideas without attaching their name to them.

Shorter Meeting Times

ThinkTank also reduces the time to prepare for, conduct and debrief after meetings. The program manager reports that his team now hits the ground running in meetings, rather than spending time at the outset setting the agenda. Better planning combined with more organized facilitation reduces meeting times, on average, by 10 to 15 percent.

After meetings, the program manager spends about half an hour laying the groundwork for action and next steps—compared to one to two hours of administrative work before. With about 18 people in meetings using ThinkTank each week, plus savings in post-meeting time, the company saves about 5 man-hours per week, or the equivalent of about \$500 worth of staff time.

In the future, the media company will roll out ThinkTank to additional divisions and initiatives.

"ThinkTank helps us run projects more efficiently and increase the quality of ideas," the program manager said. "We more clearly see the most viable projects to pursue, and it will contribute to higher-level strategic decisions such as new product models in the future."