

# 3M Case Study

Socialcast Gives 3M's Global Labs a Distinctly Local Feeling



*“Improving the flow of knowledge in motion has been instrumental to 3M’s culture of innovation, where a conversation on Spark can result in a real-time brainstorming session that can spur new creative ideas.”*

— John Woodworth, Tech Forum Chair-elect and Head of IT Lab Collaboration, 3M

## AT A GLANCE

### Industry

Diversified Technologies

### Corporate Headquarters

St. Paul, Minnesota

### Employees

84,000

### Socialcast Users

6,000

### Website

[www.3m.com](http://www.3m.com)

## IN BRIEF

### Business Challenge

By improving the flow of communication between R&D labs scattered across the globe, 3M believed they could connect the labs, solve problems and answer simple technical questions.

### Socialcast Solution

Through Socialcast, 3M has created the experience of working in “one big lab” where employees can collaborate as easily as turning to a trusted colleague down the hall.

### Business Impact

In the first year, the Socialcast community had grown to 2,000 members (currently at 6,000 members), and has made a big difference in the way the company’s labs collaborate and share. Information and ideas can flow faster, helping to make 3M one of the world’s most innovative companies.



3M is a global innovation company that “never stops inventing.” 3M serves customers through five business segments: Consumer, Industrial, Health Care, Safety & Graphics, and Electronics & Energy. Well-known brands include Post-it® notes, Scotch® tapes, Scotchgard® fabric protectors, Scotch-Brite™ scouring pads, and Filtrete™ home air filters.

3M captures the spark of new ideas and transforms them into thousands of ingenious products. A culture of creative collaboration inspires a never-ending stream of powerful technologies that make life better. With \$30 billion in sales, 3M employs 84,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 65 countries. The company sells products directly to users and through numerous wholesalers, retailers, distributors, and dealers worldwide.

## Business Challenge



Innovation is at the heart of 3M, a global company whose products can be found in virtually every consumer, technology, and industrial sector. Creativity takes place 24 hours a day in research and development labs scattered around the world, each working on different products or their variations.

3M believed that if they could improve the flow of communication among remote labs, they could solve problems collectively, post ideas, and find answers to questions. They began to explore enterprise social networking (ESN) as a platform for transforming the way people communicate and collaborate within the company.

*Better flow of information accelerates innovation through engagement in new ideas*

John Woodworth, 3M’s Tech Forum Chair-elect and Head of IT Lab Collaboration was charged with finding the best enterprise social network for 3M, one that could enhance communication while guaranteeing the safety of 3M’s intellectual property. “Security is a huge concern for us,” said Woodworth. “The fact that we discuss proprietary information online makes information security one of, if not the top concern.” Also high on 3M’s list of requirements was to create an atmosphere for scientists and engineers in 3M’s labs to all feel as if everyone was in the same building. Woodworth explained, “We wanted it to feel the same as walking down the hall to ask somebody a question.”



---

*“Spark makes it feel like everyone is all in one room. Our work serves 65 countries from 35 labs, and Spark truly brings us together as a closer community. It’s as if you could just turn the corner and ask a colleague a question.”*

— John Woodworth, Tech Forum Chair-elect and Head of IT Lab Collaboration, 3M

---

## Socialcast Solution



Any ESN solution must be easy and intuitive for users, but also comply with stringent internal systems and security protocols.

After evaluating all the major enterprise social network vendors, 3M chose Socialcast. A number of key factors made the decision easy:

- » *Employees reported that Socialcast was easy to navigate and the experience felt streamlined with the natural flow of work*
- » *Socialcast complied with 3M’s rigorous security requirements that would keep proprietary information safe*
- » *3M liked the fact that Socialcast offered the option of installing software on-premise, which added an additional layer of security if needed*
- » *Socialcast offered strong mobile options that would allow lab workers to stay connected to their work when outside of the office*

‘Spark,’ as 3M refers to their Socialcast community, has uncovered valuable information and new ways for various lab teams to work together. John Woodworth explained, “Socialcast

supports technical collaboration in two important ways. First, it helps us share and discuss content available on our ‘knowledge at rest’ resources—3M’s wikis and all of our database-stored information. Second, it facilitates ‘knowledge in motion’—those dynamic bits of data and information you find in the activity streams in Spark.” By capturing and sharing knowledge in motion, Spark helps 3M employees find a more direct path to information and expertise that can help solve problems in real time, saving hours of time they would have spent searching by themselves. Woodworth added, “Improving the flow of knowledge in motion has also been instrumental to 3M’s culture of innovation, where a conversation on Spark can result in a real-time brainstorming session that can spur new creative ideas.”

---

*Socialcast helps solve problems in real time, eliminating the hours wasted in tracking down information*

---

## Business Impact



Right out of the box Socialcast satisfied one of Woodworth’s main goals—to create a global laboratory environment. “Spark makes it feel like everyone is all in one room,” said Woodworth. “Our work serves 65 countries from 35 labs, and Spark truly brings us together as a closer community. It’s as if you could just turn the corner and ask a colleague a question.”

Socialcast’s private messaging and private group functions help employees keep in touch with their colleagues no matter where in the organization they are based. “As a manager,” continued Woodworth, “My team is all over the campus. Instead of sending a text message from my mobile device to one person on my team at a time, I can send a note to a private group on Spark so that everyone on my team can see it.”

Socialcast offers a seamless ‘out of the box’ experience and integrates easily into each employee’s flow of work. It doesn’t require time-consuming employee training, nor create an overwhelming feeling of having to learn something new.

---

*With Socialcast, remote R&D employees experience the feeling of working in ‘one big lab’*

---

Socialcast also provides analytic tools and dashboards that allow community managers to track cross-departmental activity. Having insight into interaction patterns and how activity flows between groups has helped 3M identify key ‘influencers’ and develop the right programs to increase adoption.

In the first year, Spark had grown to 2,000 members, and has made a big difference in the way the company’s labs collaborate and share. Information and ideas can flow faster, helping to make 3M one of the world’s most innovative companies. Socialcast helps 3M R&D employees experience the feeling of working in ‘one big lab’ by making it possible to collaborate seamlessly and securely.



**VMware, Inc.** 3401 Hillview Avenue Palo Alto CA 94304 USA Tel 877-486-9273 Fax 650-427-5001 [www.vmware.com](http://www.vmware.com)

Copyright © 2013 VMware, Inc. All rights reserved. This product is protected by U.S. and international copyright and intellectual property laws. VMware products are covered by one or more patents listed at <http://www.vmware.com/go/patents>. VMware is a registered trademark or trademark of VMware, Inc. in the United States and/or other jurisdictions. All other marks and names mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective companies. Item No: Socialcast-CaseStudy-3M-2014-07-30