Invensys Case Study

With Socialcast, Invensys Captures Decades of Accumulated Knowledge and Measurably Improves Productivity Worldwide

AT A GLANCE

Industry
Technology

Corporate Headquarters
London, England

Employees
14,000

Socialcast Users
4,600

Website
www.invensys.com

IN BRIEF

Business Challenge
Make the company's vast store of knowledge readily and securely available to a globally distributed organization.

Socialcast Solution
Socialcast allows engineering teams to share best practices, engage in discussions, solve problems collaboratively, and develop deeper connections with each other, personally and professionally.

Business Impact
Socialcast is now used by more than 4,600 employees. The engineering teams find information quickly, reduce redundancy, and improve project quality.

invensys

Invensys is a global technology company that works in partnership with a broad range of industrial and commercial customers to design and supply advanced technologies that optimize operational performance and profitability. Invensys' market-leading software, systems, and equipment enable customers to monitor, control, and automate their products and processes, thereby maximizing safety, efficiency, reliability, and ease of use. Active in more than 180 countries, Invensys employs over 14,000 people.

The company's Invensys Operations Management (IOM) division is a leading global technology, software, and consulting business that creates and applies advanced technologies to enable the safe and efficient operation of industrial and commercial operations such as oil refineries, fossil fuel and nuclear power plants, petrochemical works, and other manufacturing sites.

The IOM division has had a company-wide Knowledge Management Program in place for several years, and Socialcast is an important part of Invensys' internal social network.

Business Challenge

The IOM division's Knowledge Management Program needed a modern social networking platform to facilitate communications for a globally dispersed team of experts from the engineering and services organization, many of whom are located in remote geographies. By enhancing the ability of all engineers to access the same information, IOM could more confidently address global operations by moving beyond the limitations of having information in a variety of systems with varying levels of access.

Since 2006, the IOM organization had used Microsoft® SharePoint® as a content repository, but it had not proven to be user-friendly and was not widely embraced. SharePoint's security environment was quite complex and for engineers who spend considerable time at customer sites, where security is paramount, SharePoint was not an ideal platform for information sharing. Email was also limited as a means to share critical information and documents; group discussion email exchanges were quickly lost in files or inboxes.

Invensys recognized the benefits of implementing an enterprise social networking platform that would allow its Knowledge Management

Communities to search relevant discussions and share best practices and documents. The IOM division wanted to encourage cross-departmental exchanges between employees, giving them a way to share professional and personal information in order to develop broader connections. The company sought a platform that would easily and seamlessly connect their vastly dispersed global workforce, including their more mature engineering experts who possessed a wealth of invaluable accumulated expertise but were reluctant to use open discussion forums.

Easily and seamlessly connect a vastly dispersed global workforce

Invensys also needed to initially mirror, link, and later transition groups, forums, sites and repositories of documentation from SharePoint to the new social networking platform. While SharePoint did not completely satisfy Invensys' needs, many were already familiar with it, therefore any new platform would have to deliver a compelling set of features, functionality, and ease of use in order for these users to shift off of SharePoint.

Socialcast Solution

During the search for a more user-friendly enterprise social networking platform, Invensys reviewed many solutions, including Yammer, Facebook, Google Docs and Drupal. In late 2010, the Operations Knowledge Management Organization initiated a pilot project with Socialcast. The review team immediately found the interface intuitive for both technical and less technical groups. Socialcast also allowed controlled access through standard Internet protocols making the community available outside of their internal corporate network securely, which satisfied IT's concerns.

The pilot was initiated by the Knowledge Management Team and utilized the SaaS deployment of Socialcast. It was launched companywide via a marketing campaign including website announcements, t-shirts, email blasts, and word-of-mouth to drive awareness of the new platform, and to encourage participation and feedback. Many users, who had never embraced Microsoft SharePoint, quickly began using Socialcast and providing feedback.

For an organization dependent upon broad access to information regarding highly complicated processes, ignorance is expensive. It is critical that employees are able to share and tap into institutional knowledge garnered over decades. Having multiple engineers across the globe searching for similar solutions to similar inquiries is costly and inefficient. Paul Stantiford, Senior Director of Global Engineering Management, notes that much of the justification to deploy Socialcast was related to costs. When he asked other engineers and directors about cost savings for knowledge management the reply was often, "Well, you should try ignorance!"

Engineers save time by having questions answered quickly within the Socialcast community

According to Malek Madani from the Knowledge Management and Engineering Excellence team, "Before implementing the Socialcast platform, there was a lot of redundancy among our engineering teams because they were unaware that similar project issues were being addressed in different countries—there was no useful mechanism for sharing technical project information. Socialcast has provided a means to ensure our engineering delivery teams are exposed to the same knowledge and follow the same standards and procedures as colleagues around the world, allowing us to consistently deliver high quality projects."

Throughout the pilot project, engineers were polled about how they used Socialcast to save time. One example was an engineer in Australia who saved "a couple of weeks' work" when he asked a question via Socialcast during his workday and by the next morning— less than 24 hours later—he had his answer from the team in Holland, who had responded to his question while he was sleeping.

In terms of return on investment, Invensys found that apart from standard IT infrastructure and licensing expenses, the only other cost to consider is an employee's time to learn a new tool. These costs are minor and are subsequently recovered by time savings. Socialcast users spend less time looking for all kinds of information and resources available within the company such as specific answers to questions, contacts, an opinion or group opinions, human resource policies, marketing campaigns, or upcoming events. Without the ability to share information and uncover expertise, it could take an hour, a week, or multiple weeks to arrive at solutions that someone else in the organization had already invested time discovering. For the IOM division, the ROI in using Socialcast was inherent and obvious.

The most active groups on Socialcast, engineering and professional services, are helping engineers quickly resolve questions and issues concerning product lines and application development. The Operator Training Simulation engineering team uses an application to generate a high fidelity simulation model of the unique process of a particular refinery customer. Previously, team members commonly worked within their respective geographical location, creating duplicate efforts and lost time searching for the same information and contacts. Now, the team has Socialcast to facilitate troubleshooting and they use it to maintain cohesion and consistency of information across teams to better serve the customer's various refinery locations.

Business Impact

Socialcast has become the communication enabler for all Invensys employees to share information and feedback in real time, on laptops and mobile devices with regional teams around the world.

Within Socialcast, Invensys employees share information and feedback in real time

Currently more than 4,600 users and approximately 250 groups actively participate in the Socialcast community, and the numbers are growing. When surveyed, many users report they save considerable time by finding the information and answers they need faster through Socialcast. Others say that Socialcast has helped them develop relationships with people and groups around the world they might otherwise not have known. Socialcast groups have been created around everything from professional expertise, departments, and corporate improvement projects to hobbies, sports, and cultural interests.

According to Paul Stantiford, Senior Director of Global Engineering Management, "As we move forward with the Socialcast platform, we are able to integrate social networking into our daily business in a secure way. It is now one of the first places our global engineering teams go for engineering support and solution information leveraging the decades of knowledge we have acquired. The Socialcast platform has already proven to increase efficiencies, bridge enormous communication gaps and expand our knowledge base."

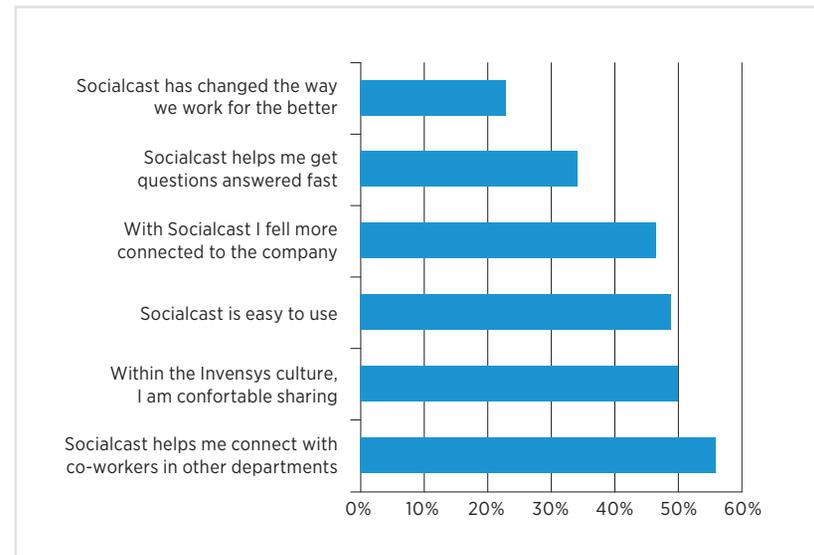*Socialcast brings the power of social into daily business in a secure way*

Figure 1. Recent Invensys Internal Survey Highlights

SOCIALCAST
by **vm**ware®