



Case Study: FESTO

Sharing ideas globally drives innovation

Festo AG is a world-leading provider of pneumatic and electric automation systems. The company employs 13,000 people in 176 countries who are dedicated to finding technical solutions that improve processes. But with people in so many different countries, how can good ideas reach people working on the same things? Festo uses the web conferencing solution from Netviewer to facilitate transfer of knowledge. During regular online meetings, colleagues share information and collaborate closely, despite being separated by great distances.

Precisely at 10 a.m., the participants arrive for the scheduled meeting. Martin Kimmich has already put on his headset and can watch as his colleagues from Brazil, Poland, and the United States enter the conference room. Unlike traditional meetings, no one is suffering from a lack of sleep or the stress and fatigue of travel, since everyone is sitting at his own desk in his own office. The meeting is taking place over the Internet, in a Web conference.

Martin Kimmich works in knowledge management where he is responsible for knowledge networks. Every four to six weeks he brings together his colleagues who are working on the same topics so they can exchange ideas virtually. Everyone sees the same document, such as a presentation that could be used to explain an improved production process. „In a global corporation, processes may be repeated at more than one location. To avoid having several locations all trying to reinvent the wheel at the same time, it is essential that we continuously exchange information,“ according to Martin Kimmich.

FESTO

Festo AG is a world leading provider of pneumatic and electric automation systems. Founded in Esslingen, Germany in 1925, Festo has a global outlook but remains a family-run company. In 2008, Festo Group achieved sales of approximately 1.7 billion euro. The company employs 13,000 people at 250 locations in 176 countries.

More information:

www.festo.com



netviewer

Participants in various knowledge networks have personal meetings about once per year. „Personal contact is a major aspect of having a trusting relationship,“ he says. But it is neither possible nor necessary to hold international meetings every time there’s a need to discuss something. Paying for hotels, flights, and meals is very costly. Traveling to a meeting consumes a great deal of time and pollutes the environment. To keep contacts alive and encourage the exchange of information in between meetings, Martin Kimmich regularly holds Web conferences via Netviewer. This gives Festo co-workers the opportunity to share ideas and suggestions for improvement among each other.

Unlike a simple teleconference, participants in a Netviewer meeting literally have the information in front of their eyes. All kinds of documents can be transferred live and even jointly edited if desired, including presentations, spreadsheets, images, texts, and videos. “Having visual support enormously simplifies how we convey information, according to Martin Kimmich’s experiences. “Everyone can immediately see what we are talking about, and misunderstandings due to language barriers are less common.”

Festo has a long history of innovation and manufacturing but it also uses Web conferences to support and advise its customers. Since Netviewer is very easy to use and does not require installation of software, it gives Festo a rapid and straightforward way to assist its customers with highly targeted advice. Internally, project meetings like those held to roll out new software applications are likewise accompanied by Web conferences. But this is in no way limited only to international projects. Even employees who work from corporate headquarters in Germany take advantage of Web conferences to communicate at short notice and save themselves a long walk.

Web conferences allow Festo employees to work more closely together and maintain a dialog with their customers, while simultaneously saving the company a great deal of time and money. But the benefits do not end there. “Employees can be reached faster and they work more productively. This ultimately speeds up the development of our products and helps us bring new products to market faster,“ according to Martin Kimmich. Reducing the time-to-market is a major aspect of success in global competition.

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MARTIN KIMMICH
KNOWLEDGE MANAGER, FESTO

At a glance:

- Intensive exchange of knowledge and ideas
- Close collaboration despite great distances
- Higher advisory and service quality
- Solutions developed internationally can be brought to market faster
- Less traveling, lower travel expenses, and less time lost during absences
- Lower CO₂ emissions

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