



Leading Automaker Takes Employee Collaboration to New Heights with Communication Software

Overview

Country: Germany

Industry: Manufacturing

Customer Profile

BMW is one of the world's most successful motor vehicle manufacturers, employing 100,000 people worldwide and managing 24 production sites in 13 countries.

Business Situation

Optimum employee communication and collaboration are important success factors to BMW in maintaining its edge against international competition.

Solution

BMW installed Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 R2 for improved communication and collaboration, supporting efficient business processes.

Benefits

- Reduces conferencing costs significantly
- Supports faster project completion time
- Resolves IT support issues faster
- Reduces IT management costs

BMW AG employs over 100,000 people worldwide and maintains 24 production sites in 13 countries. Global project teams depend on communication and collaboration to design new products and bring them into production. Quickly bringing new models into production is critical to maintaining the company's edge against competitors. BMW has 11,000 employees taking advantage of the instant messaging and presence capabilities of Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007. To expand on these capabilities, the company deployed Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2. BMW expects employees to take advantage of improved desktop sharing, plus audio and video conferencing capabilities, to collaborate with coworkers and business partners. The company also hopes to reduce audio and Web conferencing significantly by replacing services from the leading online meeting vendor.

Microsoft Office System
Customer Solution Case Study



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Situation

With rising raw material costs, the European motor industry is under greater pressure than ever before. In spite of these challenges, BMW continues to report strong earnings and sales. The automotive manufacturer sold 1.4 million BMW brand cars in 2008.

The company's success stems from its highly efficient operations and the value that it places on its employees, who help the company maintain its reputation for high-quality engineering, luxury, innovative design, and first-class performance.

BMW has a reputation for innovation that includes its use of sophisticated IT tools across the business. It has an in-depth understanding of advanced technologies and is adopting new products and systems in pursuit of increased productivity and operational excellence.

This commitment to technology innovation is especially notable in the software infrastructure that supports more than 100,000 people in BMW offices worldwide and 24 production sites in 13 countries.

Employees working globally rely on tools to work together effectively and share information with the right people at the right time. This means that the applications they use—computers, laptops, and mobile devices—must be integrated, familiar, and easy to use. Therefore, the IT department at BMW must also support sophisticated communications and collaboration across geographically distributed locations.

Effective communication among employees who work on different continents is essential to help bring new products and services to market quickly. Teams may be comprised of members from research laboratories, design centers, and manufacturing sites. An office can be any place from which people create,

share, and store information and collaborate with coworkers, partners, customers, and others on projects and business processes.

BMW uses several vendors and tools for its audio, video, and Web conferencing. An IT Section Manager at BMW explained that four years ago, when it deployed a competing solution from the largest networking hardware company, the upfront cost was small, but it took a lot of engineering to make it work in a way that was acceptable. After it was set up, it still took employees several steps to set up conferences. The integration of this solution with the Microsoft® Office environment was also challenging. That solution didn't have a plug-in for the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007 messaging and collaboration client until almost one year after Office Outlook 2007 was released. Having several other audio conferencing services in place results in higher management costs and increased complexity for users.

Web conferencing is also a critical tool, as it is used extensively for training and also by engineers to share design specifications. When considering its current hosted solution, it did not make sense to upload its proprietary and highly valuable intellectual property and information to a hosted solution because the data is stored offsite, when an equally functional solution such as Office Communications Server 2007 R2 is available as an on-premise solution.

To address issues such as these, BMW works closely with technology partners to test new products that can help the company better achieve its business goals.

Solution

BMW currently has more than 10,000 users using the instant messaging and presence capabilities of Office Communications Server 2007 and Office Live Communications Server

2005. Office Communications Server 2007 is one of the cornerstones of unified communications solutions from Microsoft, providing instant messaging, presence, voice communications, as well as audio, video, and Web conferencing.

After the successful pilot of Office Communications Server 2007 and the Office Communicator client, BMW accepted an invitation from Microsoft to take part in the Rapid Deployment Program for Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2. BMW deployed Office Communications Server 2007 R2 in pilot mode and is in the process of upgrading employees from Office Communications Server 2007. The company expects to have up to 17,000 employees using Office Communications Server 2007 R2 in 2009.

The new features available in Office Communications Server 2007 R2 that are most important to BMW are the dial-in audio conferencing and the desktop sharing. These additional capabilities will enable it to reduce the overall costs for voice technology.

Employees benefit from the ease of setting up audio and Web conferencing with Office Communications Server 2007 R2. One of the driving factors for deploying Office Communications Server 2007 R2 is the tight integration with the desktop.

Using the dial-in conferencing capabilities of Office Communications Server 2007 R2, employees can set up audio and Web conferences and dial in from a mobile, desk, or home phone. Now, employees can easily provide either a link to join from their computer or a simple conference call number for participants who join by phone. This is especially important for participants outside the office, such as customers, partners, and employees who do not work in the office.

With Office Communications Server 2007 R2 widely deployed, the company is able to host its own audio, video, and Web conferencing. Engineers appreciate that conferences are hosted internally in Office Communications Server 2007 R2, as they frequently share designs with confidential and proprietary information. Office Communications Server keeps the data in house rather than storing it on a vendor's server.

BMW sees an opportunity to reduce cost and enhance service to associates by replacing services from the largest networking hardware provider with Office Communications Server 2007 R2 as its main audio and Web conferencing solution in 2009.

With the deployment of Office Communications Server 2007 R2, employees will be able to take advantage of desktop sharing in Office Communicator 2007 R2. A participant in a conference call can use the desktop sharing capability to display his or her entire computer desktop to the other participants. IT support teams at BMW also use desktop sharing to help with issue resolution. Employees can share desktops with the IT support team, enabling them to more quickly identify the cause of desktop problems.

In the manufacturing industry, it is important to provide the experience of using Office Communicator client to external users such as consultants and vendors. These external users can now use Microsoft Office Communicator Web Access, the browser-based version of the Office Communicator client. It provides a much closer experience to the full client version.

Benefits

With the deployment of Office Communications Server 2007 R2, the company can improve its communications

capabilities with little additional investment. It can expect to reduce conferencing costs as well as support costs. In addition, Office Communications Server 2007 R2 enables employees to improve productivity and efficiently communicate across continents, helping to speed project completion time.

Reduces Conferencing Costs

Reduction of the costs of audio, video, and Web conferencing can be achieved when Office Communications Server 2007 R2 is widely deployed. The company can also reduce its dependency on external conference providers. In 2009, BMW expects significant cost savings for conferencing on an annual basis. It expects even larger cost savings in future years as the dependency on external conferencing solutions is reduced.

Supports Faster Project Completion Time

BMW produces and delivers innovative motor vehicles to market quickly. It increasingly depends on successful communication and collaboration among the skilled engineers, project managers, and other employees located around the globe. The key people for development projects may be located on different continents. Now they will be able to depend on Office Communications Server 2007 R2 to communicate effectively.

BMW routinely works on large projects to bring new products into production throughout its global production network. In many cases, people running the subprojects are located in Germany and the United States. Office Communications Server 2007 R2 will help support project completion times by enabling employees to reach out to company experts faster using instant messaging and presence capabilities. Project team members can also schedule conference calls faster and can include both internal employees and critical partners with the new dial-in conferencing capabilities of Office Communications Server 2007 R2.

Employees will enjoy improved productivity using Office Communications Server 2007 R2. With the integration of unified communications solutions on the desktop, employees will save time. Users are already authenticated, so employees can schedule meetings immediately—much faster than with previous solutions such as the Web conferencing service that was used from a leading networking equipment provider.

Resolves IT Support Issues Faster

Office Communications Server 2007 R2 supports desktop sharing, enabling employees to display their entire computer desktop to IT support. The IT support team can use this capability to resolve issues very quickly because desktop sharing with Office Communications Server R2 takes about one third of the time of other desktop sharing solutions.

With the improvement in desktop sharing, the IT support team can quickly identify the causes of desktop issues, leading to faster resolution and lower support costs.

Reduces IT Management Costs

Office Communications Server 2007 R2 can be used to efficiently deploy and manage innovative communications technologies. With full deployment, the company will have fewer solutions to manage, which will simplify the infrastructure and decrease IT administration time and cost. The multiple existing communications solutions in place at BMW required many LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) directories and duplication, requiring significant time to set up and manage.

Office Communications Server 2007 R2 is built on the Active Directory® service, using a single directory for communications management, so IT administrators will spend less time addressing directory and

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infrastructure management issues and more time focusing on strategic initiatives.

Microsoft Office System

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Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2
 - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007
 - Microsoft Office Communicator 2007
 - Microsoft Office Communicator Web Access
- Technologies
 - Active Directory

Hardware

- Microsoft UC-qualified devices provide the optimal UC experience and economics: wideband audio, plug-and-play installation, and seamless Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 integration.
 - Polycom CX200 USB phone
 - Jabra GN2000 NC USB headset