

Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture)

The Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture wanted to improve and optimise its document management and collaboration capabilities in order to enable its geographically distributed staff to work together more efficiently. The chamber implemented Micro Focus® Vibe®, boosting the productivity of its teams.



Overview

The Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture is a public body in Lower Saxony, Germany, established in line with regional laws regarding the institution's function and operations. The institution has around 53,000 customers, which are primarily enterprises in agriculture and forestry, horticulture and fishery. Through the links between head offices and honorary offices, it puts the concept of self-government into daily practice.

Challenge

The Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture depends on numerous distributed teams of people internal and external to the organisation, working together on projects and documents.

Exchanging documents via email and maintaining the document management system was becoming a significant administrative burden.

“By storing all data relevant to a team or a project in Vibe, you can simply look it up, which saves significant time and effort.”

BERND NILLING

IT Specialist
Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture

Some teams also rely on collaboration with external parties, such as representatives from governmental departments. The integration of these external people into document management workflows was limited to sending emails, which increased the workload for everybody.

The chamber looked for a solution to supplement its existing collaboration and document management processes, which would make sharing documents, tasks and keeping information updated easier.

Solution

The organisation evaluated Micro Focus Vibe along with leading alternatives, and concluded that the Novell (now part of Micro Focus) solution fit well into the existing IT environment and met all of its requirements. The solution runs on virtualised Micro Focus Open Enterprise Server instances in a multi-tier environment for high-availability, and it is tightly integrated with the chamber's Micro Focus eDirectory™ and Micro Focus GroupWise® solutions. The chamber plans to integrate Micro Focus Messenger as its corporate instant messaging solution to further speed up the information flow.

CONET, a PartnerNet® Platinum Partner, was commissioned to design, develop and customise the Micro Focus Vibe solution to use the Chamber's own branding. In addition to training



At a Glance

■ Industry

Government

■ Location

Germany

■ Challenge

Collaborating with external parties and maintaining the document management system was becoming burdensome.

■ Solution

Use Micro Focus Vibe to create team spaces and tag content in order to better manage documents.

■ Results

- + Improved information sharing across teams
- + Enabled distributed teams to coordinate tasks more efficiently
- + Accelerated information flow and simplified interaction with customised landing pages

“By eliminating the requirement to manually control document versions or use email to control workflow, the Novell (now part of Micro Focus) solution will dramatically increase the efficiency and agility of large projects.”

FRANK KLUGE

IT Manager
Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture

and supporting the Chamber's IT staff, the partner ran workshops for business users, supported the rollout of the solution and provided quick-start guides to ensure that the solution could rapidly deliver value.

After reference visits and strategy discussions, the chamber's IT team decided to roll out Micro Focus Vibe on a team-by-team basis. Each team within the chamber decides for itself if it wants to use the new solution and how the team workspaces should be configured. Supported by the central IT staff, the teams then develop customised designs for common tasks and projects they want to support with the new solution.

Using this approach, the chamber has already rolled out the solution to five teams and is working on six more rollouts. At present there are 125 active users; plans are in place to extend the solution to 1,000 users, and ultimately the entire chamber.

To enable staff to quickly and easily organise and find the documents they need, the chamber focused on optimising document management with new methods such as team spaces and content tagging. Individual landing pages for different teams provide tailored project dashboards and helpful links to relevant resources. Tasks lists and calendars are used to coordinate work easily. The inbound email feature of Micro Focus Vibe was activated to enable users to create new entries and comments directly from their email clients. Some users also take advantage of the mobile interface of Micro Focus Vibe to check project status and access information from their BlackBerry devices.

Results

One of the first teams to use Micro Focus Vibe was the IT group working on software distribution and desktop management. This team now relies on Micro Focus Vibe for all of its task management.

“We use the comments feature in Vibe to organise our work,” said Frank Kluge, IT Manager at the Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture. “It is much easier and faster to get an overview now. You simply click on a task and then you instantly see all the comments, including any information about who has already been working on that task and what they have done. This simplifies collaboration significantly.”

Interaction between users through comments instead of emails improves transparency and accelerates the information flow substantially. It also helps the chamber's IT teams to build up a lasting knowledge base.

“In short, we now know more about what is going on in our teams,” said Bernd Nilling, IT Specialist at the Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture. “By storing all data relevant to a team or a project in Vibe, you can simply look it up, which saves significant time and effort.”

In a major upcoming project, a large team composed of more than 300 people spread across Lower Saxony will use Micro Focus Vibe to create a single shared pool of data and to integrate external people from governmental departments. “By eliminating the requirement to manually control document versions or use email to control workflow, the Novell (now part of Micro Focus) solution will dramatically increase the efficiency and agility of large projects,” said Kluge.



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