



Effective collaboration is key to climate change project

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Confederation of British Industry

A comprehensive BT package helps the CBI’s Climate Change Task Force to accomplish its work

Client

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) is the UK’s leading business organisation, speaking for 240,000 businesses that together represent about a third of the private sector workforce. A not-for-profit organisation, the CBI works to influence policy-making in order to create favourable conditions for UK business and, as the UK’s official business representative in the European Union, it lobbies on international as well as national issues.

As part of its broader commitment to improving the conditions in which we all live and work, in January 2007 the CBI set up a Climate Change Task Force (CCTF). Chaired by BT Chief Executive Ben Verwaayen, the task force was made up of 17 chairmen and chief executives from some of the UK’s biggest companies. Its purpose was to consider the challenges posed by climate change and to identify appropriate actions to deal with them.

Challenge

Although the task force was ready to begin its work, it urgently needed an extranet that would give members an online forum in which to communicate easily with each other, to share a calendar, and to access information such as draft reports, meeting minutes, schedules and research documents. BT had undertaken to provide the communications infrastructure, as sponsor of the report that the task force would produce. However, the extranet had to be delivered on budget before the CCTF’s first meeting – just six weeks ahead. Together with speed and ease of use, security was of critical importance, given the sensitive nature of the content and the seniority of the task force members. The CBI had also requested that the solution delivered by BT should have the same ‘look and feel’ as its website.

The BT Differentiators

- Ability to deliver a tailored solution on time and within budget
- BT’s hosting, monitoring, and user support capabilities
- A collaborative approach that extended to all aspects of the project

Case study

CBI Climate Change Task Force

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Solution

BT Global Services put forward a proposal based on IBM's Lotus Quickplace, a web-based application that allows geographically dispersed individuals to collaborate using a shared, online workspace. This solution matched the CBI's technical specification in every respect and, following a project definition workshop between BT and the task force administrators at the CBI, it was accepted as the basis of the CCTF's online forum.

BT set about customising Quickplace to meet the CBI's precise requirements, which it did through close collaboration between BT Global Services and BT Design, the BT Group's systems design and development unit. As well as adapting the web coding in Quickplace, so that the CCTF's online workspace reflected the style of the CBI website, BT also enhanced the solution's management of user accounts and passwords to further strengthen its existing security capabilities.

BT produced user guides for the task force members and for the administrators at the CBI, set up the required 50 user accounts on the system, and ran a training day at the CBI before the solution went live at the end of March 2007.

Offices worldwide

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“The team at BT was instrumental in pulling together this project in such a short timeline – less than two months,” says the CBI. “We were impressed by the efficiency of all involved and the dedication of the BT Global Services team in making the extranet meet all our requirements – yet remain as user friendly as possible.”

BT Global Services hosted the extranet at BT's data centre in Cardiff and provided 24*7 helpdesk support for all the system's users. As part of its monitoring service, BT also kept traffic logs that were used to generate a report of usage patterns before the system was closed down. Finally, when the task force had published its report and users had ceased to access the extranet, BT produced an archive of all the content to create a permanent record of all the key documents for the CBI.

Since the CCTF completed its work, IBM Lotus Quickplace has been replaced by IBM Lotus Quickr, a Java-based version of the product that is also supported by BT and, amongst other new capabilities, includes Web 2.0-compatible functions such as blogging and wikis.

Value

The BT package, including a range of professional services such as development and support, represented excellent value for money because it offered the CBI complete peace of mind while remaining within the available budget. The choice of a hosted service made this temporary solution easier and more cost effective to provision and monitor throughout its six months of operational life.

Not only did BT provide the desired solution in time for the task force to begin its work, it also ensured through training and documentation that the users were fully up-to-speed before the system went live. Task force members and CBI administrators used the extranet to centrally manage their schedules and to share information without having to resort to numerous – and potentially confusing – series of emails or phone calls. One particularly helpful feature was the extranet's ability to send its users an automatic notification whenever a new document is added, together with the appropriate link.

The system's users were very satisfied with its functionality, security, and reliability, as well as the all-round support they received from BT. “Feedback from members of the CBI's Climate Change Task Force was very positive, with many commenting on how easy it was to access and use,” the CBI says.

BT delivered a tailored system that met all the CBI's needs in just six weeks – demonstrating effective collaboration in support of an urgent requirement from a high-profile task force dealing with an issue of global importance. The task force itself used collaborative technologies to reduce the need for its members to travel, due to environmental considerations as well as time constraints. BT's internal collaboration across its different lines of business mirrored this approach, thereby contributing towards shaping a new working model for forums such as the CCTF in the future.

BT's timely delivery of the solution helped the CBI's Climate Change Task Force to complete its report, 'Climate Change: Everyone's Business', on schedule in September 2007, ready for publication two months later. Amongst other conclusions, the report stated that the UK's carbon reduction targets for 2020 were likely to be missed, but that the country could achieve its 2050 goals at a manageable cost. The report identified priority areas for action and committed the CBI to continuing its leading role on climate change.

Core BT Services

- BT supplied IBM Lotus Quickplace (now Quickr) from the BT Unified Communications portfolio
- Professional services including software development, hosting and 24*7 monitoring of the solution, provision of user training and documentation, archiving
- 24*7 helpdesk support

