Case Study - Discovery Mining

Situation

Discovery Mining (DM) is a software company headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area. They were founded in May 2001 and have approximately 56 employees. DM is performing extremely well in its market (automated discovery software for the legal field) and was #188 on the Inc. 2007 500 fastest growing companies list. They have offices in San Francisco, Washington, New York, Chicago and London.

DM has a distributed team and infrastructure and lacked a centralized knowledge store for the information people carried around in their heads. They collaborated through email, a corporate wiki, a marketing encyclopedia portal, internal documents, and files. Developing timely, well-written responses with a consistent message across the company was key but involved sifting through various sources of information and the strong involvement of Andy Jenks, Co-Founder and Senior Vice President of Sales. Andy heard about GroupSwim from an acquaintance and thought it could be the right solution to provide a central information source for his team and freeing some of his time.

Objectives

Discovery Mining started using GroupSwim in early November of 2007. Andy initially rolled-out to his sales team and then added Marketing and Operations. The objectives at the time for using GroupSwim were:

1. Provide one place to get information on the DM solution and sales process
2. Reinforce consistent messaging across the sales team
3. Reduce management time answering redundant questions
4. Share best practices and success stories across the teams
5. Utilize central knowledge base for responses to detailed RFIs

Challenges

The primary barrier was breaking the team's habit of relying on emails to get questions answered and treating each question as unrelated to others previously fielded. Andy had to train his team to first look at the knowledge already consolidated in GroupSwim and attempt to answer questions for themselves. The adaption took some effort to reinforce and change behavior. Using GroupSwim's email-in functionality helped smooth the transition.

Results

GroupSwim is now the "brain" for sales. The team consistently goes to GroupSwim to find answers and share information. By embracing the "email is for communication; not for information" mantra, the team has streamlined their email traffic and increased consistency across their communications. DM's

product and customer requirements are complex, so questions and answers can vary widely. Since GroupSwim automatically tags all content and suggests related discussions and documents, the team is very successful finding the information it needs.

GroupSwim has also accelerated DM's ability to train new team members quickly and effectively. GroupSwim provides an ideal knowledge base for Andy's new team members to learn about DM's product, sales process, and company operations. Since RFIs, best practices, competitive information, technical explanations, and feature request/discussions are all in one place, DM has a perfect place for new employees and partners to learn.

Andy has since rolled-out GroupSwim to Professional Services and is in the process of adding Customer Support and Engineering. He has seen noticeable results in the following areas:

1. Sales team is consistently "on-message" and executing efficiently on the sales process
2. Repeat sales have increased as the sales team is doing a much better job in the initial sale, setting expectations and articulating solution value
3. Management time answering questions, assisting with RFI questions, and performing other repeatable tasks has dropped significantly. Andy estimates that he has gained "2 hours a day" from using GroupSwim
4. New team members are coming "up-to-speed" significantly faster than in the past, i.e. in days versus weeks

Summary

Discovery Mining is delighted with GroupSwim and will be rolling out to the entire company in Q1 of 2008. They also intend to roll-out a GroupSwim community for their customers to achieve similar benefits.