

Case Study: Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

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The pain

As a federal agency, many many times we are tasked at getting stakeholder input and acceptance. One of the many problems is getting all stakeholders onto "The Same Page". This is extremely difficult and is amplified by the fact that we work with all states. This means different time zones and the inability to get people to work together. When we have a major project like addressing a technical document that will eventually be broadcasted nationally our only option is to send the document to all interested parties and have them address their comments and suggestions over a Word document.

Using track changes becomes a real nightmare to consolidate comments suggestions and disagreements. On many occasions this whole back and forth exercise leads to mistakes, which frustrates people, not to mention the time it consumes! Simple projects are complicated and larger projects become unbearable.

A case in point is a recent project whereby we needed to get a technical working group on a particular subject matter, in order to provide input into the development of a new and more comprehensive document. We chose not to use the Word document's 'track changes' feature as we required the project to move forward very quickly.

The solution

Knowing that the potential for failure was high, we searched the Internet for sites that had two criteria, 1. Produce real-time collaboration 2. Ease of use by users. We knew that there must have been something out there that would solve our problem. We found Clinked!

Clinked offered the much needed resources to get the job done within the time frame we were looking for, due to the Real-Time collaboration and ease of use. Not completely convinced of Clinked's ability to deliver, we developed a mock-up of the site and tested it on a few people in the group. To my surprise they all liked it and we have collaborating ever since. We are close to finishing up the project in record time and all issues and disagreements are being flushed out by way of the discussion groups.

When someone wants to bring up a subject they are interested in discussing the option is there to open a new discussion group. This option is so important for the fact that everyone sees the discussion and knows what the issues are and what was the successful resolution of the problem(s), and the group moves on. This helps immensely when future discussions come up. No one can say that the issues were NOT addressed. Great conversation stopper!

Relief

Finding Clinked was a great relief and a window into the future for us. We are now able to develop more and more complex projects and know that we are going to successfully start and finish the projects in record time. I don't know what else we would have done to make this project work, I really don't. Thanks to Clinked and its support group for the help in making our lives' a bit less stressful!

