Aviva Unites Its Global Organisation Using Online Collaboration Solution

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom
Industry: Financial services—Insurance

Customer Profile
With a 300-year heritage, Aviva is the world's fifth-largest insurance group and the largest in the U.K. It has a leading position in Europe and is expanding its business in Asia Pacific and the U.S.

Business Situation
As part of its strategic vision, Aviva needed to optimise global internal communication and promote collaboration, creating a new knowledge-sharing environment for its 54,000 employees.

Solution
Aviva worked with Microsoft Services to deploy a collaboration system with global access to information and create a foundation for future applications.

Benefits
- Reduced risk
- Improved collaboration
- Fast implementation
- Future integration with Microsoft

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>
> Toby Redshaw, Chief Information Officer, Aviva

Aviva is a global life and general insurance services company built around the needs of its customers. It has offices in 28 countries with 54,000 employees serving 50 million customers, and first started operating more than 300 years ago. In 2007, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Moss set out his strategic vision—One Aviva, Twice the Value—to unify the company under a single brand, worldwide. Global communication and collaboration across the business was a key challenge, which required both a technical environment and cultural change. To address this, Aviva implemented Microsoft Office SharePoint Online as its communications environment and partnered with Microsoft Services, which deployed the solution quickly and cost-effectively within the tight 150-day timeframe.

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Situation

As the fifth-largest insurance group worldwide, Aviva provides savings, investments, and insurance, and has been operating since 1696. The company's 54,000 employees serve more than 50 million people in 28 countries, aiming to create prosperity and peace of mind for its customers. Aviva is now one of the leading providers of life and pension products in Europe, with a market-leading position in the U.K., and is actively expanding its business in Asia Pacific and the U.S. The group specialises in long-term savings, fund management, and general insurance. In 2008, Aviva generated premium income and investment sales of £51 billion (U.S.$85 billion), and held £381 billion of funds under management.

The Business Challenge

Andrew Moss joined Aviva as Chief Finance Officer in 2004, becoming global Chief Executive Officer in July 2007. He defined a new vision for the group—One Aviva, Twice the Value—to drive the company to an even higher level of performance. This included a focus on:

- Developing the group's existing businesses
- Creating a strong regional business unit structure
- Rigorously allocating capital resources
- Increasing customer reach
- Boosting productivity

The company needed the capacity to communicate with and engage all employees but had no platform to do so. There was no easy way to unify regional initiatives, share best practices, and ensure consistency. Aviva wanted to encourage innovation, improve efficiency, and enhance the teamwork required for continued success.

A unified global intranet would provide a key tool for Aviva to implement cultural change internally and develop its business strategy for the coming decades. It needed to provide market-leading collaboration capabilities for employees and also support them in gathering and accessing of knowledge on a worldwide basis. The solution—called Aviva World—was set to launch within 150 days, setting a highly demanding challenge.

Defining the IT Challenge

Toby Redshaw was hired as the global Chief Information Officer in the first quarter of 2008. He says: "Firstly, we needed a global intranet—something that was easy to use and manage, and would help change the culture of the company. Secondly, we wanted a knowledge and collaboration environment to help people retain the institutional memory of the company, capture the knowledge that often leaves when people move on, and work in teams faster, better, and cheaper. It had to be an accessible store with first-class search capabilities."

Another of Redshaw's goals was to compress the delivery cycle time in IT from concept to solution. Aviva needed this solution to reach everyone quickly and easily. The challenge was determining how to be locally present and agile, while benefiting from technology on a global scale. Accordingly, Redshaw asked Matt Fahy, Global IT Services Director at Aviva, to lead the project and deliver it in a rapid and innovative way.

Aviva began to search for a partner to implement the business solution. Fahy says: "Aviva wanted a partner that could

take responsibility for the entire solution. Microsoft Services could work with us end to end for a single solution. It had deep technical expertise and the ability to manage a complex programme, including multiple partners, while helping us to build an in-house centre of excellence."

Solution

The Aviva World global solution was based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Online, which has been fully licensed for three years. It provides enterprise content management and search, including document management, Web content records, and rights management. It also allows the creation of wikis and blogs, and enhanced business intelligence with key performance indicator dashboards.

Redshaw says: "The solution brought Aviva a communications portal, a modern collaboration environment, a knowledge platform using new tools, and a foundation for us to use as a launch pad for further applications."

In the first quarter of 2008, Aviva embraced software-plus-services, granting Microsoft preferred vendor status. Fahy says: "We chose to work with Microsoft because it offered us a great environment, and was strong in user interaction. Microsoft could offer Office SharePoint Online in a hosted environment over the Internet, and make it available very quickly."

Redshaw adds: "We looked at total cost of ownership and examined the underlying architecture, focusing on the ability to provide services with the software to ensure success. We then evaluated the roadmaps, including the two, three, and four-year impact. I

needed to make a software decision that looked good this quarter, next quarter, next year, and the year after. We felt we were getting a solution—we were getting software and a service. This was a whole package that looked like it was more about the solution inside the company, and also about the benefit we'll provide to our business and our partners."

The first phase began in June 2008 with a deadline for delivery in late 2008. With Microsoft Services driving the project, the hosted service was delivered ahead of the challenging 150-day target. Redshaw says: "Together with Microsoft, we hit the overall goal in 142 days and helped Aviva achieve the deployment in around one half of the cost of the original budget. However, while appreciating the savings, we're most excited about the functionality Microsoft Online Services is bringing to Aviva."

Benefits

Office SharePoint Online offered a user-friendly global social intranet, which has vastly improved collaboration across the organisation. Under the leadership of Microsoft Services, a number of Microsoft partners acted as a unified team to ensure that targets were met in a cost-effective way. Aviva has achieved savings in project delivery and has developed a strategic business tool that will provide opportunity for further implementation of Microsoft technology.

Reduced Project Risk—Microsoft Services Leads Delivery
The software-plus-service model helped ensure efficient delivery, with a much lower demand on Aviva technical staff to support deployment. But critical to the success of the project was pulling together the various elements of the

project, with different partners leading different work streams.

Microsoft Services took the lead role as solution partner, while working closely with a number of key partner organisations, including Accenture, Avanade, and Oxford Consulting Associates. After six weeks spent defining the project scope, Microsoft Services delivered the project under fixed price terms, reducing risk for Aviva. Following a successful conclusion of the first phase of the project, Microsoft Services is continuing to provide Aviva with development expertise, using Microsoft Global Services India offshore resources for cost-effective delivery, while also providing on-going support for the solution.

Improved Cross-Organisation Collaboration from Global Social Intranet
Keeping Aviva teams locally agile, while benefiting from content on a global scale, requires technology to be easy to use and manage. Office SharePoint Online helped Aviva to provide a user-centric focus, with very little training required to support the adoption by staff. It also allowed knowledge and the institutional memory to be stored, easily searched, and accessed by the right people at the right time.

The portal has significantly improved employee productivity and collaboration across the organisation. Employees can build their own sites easily. Forums, blogs, and wikis help employees put forward their opinions on matters such as savings, leadership, and customer engagement—increasing debate and exchanges of ideas and information. The first stage of the adoption of Aviva World was driven by the use of forums,

team sites, and key content. Office SharePoint Online provides a collaboration platform, but it is the information architecture and site design that ensures people can find what they need, where they expect to find it.

Microsoft Services was able to create a structure that allowed better information sharing in a consistent manner between different groups within Aviva. Microsoft Services also advised Aviva on how to ensure the right content was transferred to the portal, and done so in a way that could take advantage of the full search capabilities of Office SharePoint Online.

Fahy says: "Recently, Aviva held a 24-hour online session—using the Aviva World intranet—with all its businesses across the world. The event marked a milestone in our move to a global brand, and we wanted to celebrate the future of the organisation. This type of global event would never have been possible without Microsoft portal technology. A year ago, we couldn't imagine hosting a 24-hour global event."

Fast Implementation and Savings from Software-plus-Services
"Our new communications portal is less expensive than other solutions we were considering," Fahy says. "There are things we've done since the rollout that have been more cost effective than if we had not gone down this path."

For example, Aviva recently needed to build a human resources (HR) feedback tool for employees and managers. Fahy says: "HR budgeted a significant sum to develop and host this tool based on a third-party provider proposal, but the Aviva IT team built this internally using Office SharePoint Online for one tenth of the cost anticipated."

For More Information

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Roadmap Aims for Increased Integration with Microsoft
Redshaw is dedicated to continuing to transform Aviva. He says: "Our IT department is making a three to four year investment, analysing underlying architecture and engineering skills required to support it. The longer term roadmap includes increased integration with other Microsoft products, with future plans to deploy Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007."

Redshaw summarises: "This Microsoft environment has transformed the company in an amazingly tight window. Microsoft helped us deliver faster, with lower risk, and more cost effectively than if we'd tried to do it ourselves. This is the beginning of the journey and we're really excited about 2010 and beyond."

Microsoft Services

Microsoft Services helps customers and partners discover and implement high-value Microsoft solutions that generate rapid, meaningful, and measurable results. As the consulting, technical support, and customer service arm of the world's leading software company, Microsoft Services enables the successful adoption, deployment, and use of Microsoft solutions and technologies for all customers, from the individual to the enterprise.

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