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CHALLENGE

TAC, a world leader in building automation systems, needed the sales and marketing infrastructure to support rapid global growth.

SOLUTION

ActiveMedia®, a digital asset management system, provided a centralized approach to storing, managing, and rapidly distributing global marketing materials.

RESULTS

TAC gained the business agility – in terms of time, money, and brand control – to enable rapid, corporate-sanctioned, regional response around the world. TAC achieved this agility without the expense and personnel resources typically associated with deploying sophisticated enterprise software on a global scale. The company calculates that ActiveMedia resulted in a savings of \$250,000 in the first year alone.

Seven continents, 80 countries, more than 500 locations and 5,000 employees...so states TAC, a world leader in building automation systems, where Jeff Kosiorek, senior manager of corporate marketing and communications, is charged with providing the sales and marketing infrastructure to fuel that growth globally.

That is a tall order, given the time-zone and localization challenges inherent in TAC’s globally distributed marketing operations. The task appears even more daunting when you consider the high cost of production, storage and shipping for intercontinental marketing fulfillment, and the costly process of physically sending large media files on compact discs (CDs) and DVDs to low-bandwidth remote offices. Top it off with labor-intensive search-and-retrieval issues and disk cost associated with storing digital media on disparate servers across the global enterprise, and the goal of supporting such widespread growth cost effectively seems unreachable.

FINDING THE SOLUTION

But with 15 years of strategic marketing management experience under his belt and the proven expertise to deliver digital marketing solutions to enterprise organizations, Kosiorek had the marketing savvy and technical know-how to meet the challenge head-on.

And he did just that — by launching the ActiveMedia digital asset management (DAM). The solution has globally empowered TAC with the business agility it needed — in terms of time, money, and brand control — to enable rapid, corporate-sanctioned regional response on a global level. And Kosiorek achieved all this without the high price tag and personnel resources typically associated with deploying sophisticated enterprise software on a global scale.

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THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

During a post-launch meeting in his North Andover, Massachusetts office, a satisfied Kosiorek sat down to discuss his strategy to improve TAC global-marketing effectiveness and to provide his insight, from a marketing asset

management perspective, about the decision to deploy ActiveMedia.

“My goal was to centrally manage the assets on a global level, so that authorized individuals across the enterprise could easily repurpose them for their local market needs.”

-Jeff Kosiorek, senior manager of corporate marketing and communications, TAC

“In essence,” Kosiorek said, “it all came down to ActiveMedia’s robust support of the think globally, act locally go-to-market model that is my vision for TAC.” He then explained that as a technologist, he is swift to exploit innovations in digital communication to extend the reach of TAC globally. As a marketer, however, he is keenly aware that for a globalization strategy to succeed, it must support the reality that relationships are almost always built locally.

But how did the think globally, act locally mantra translate into DAM system requirements for TAC — with its lean corporate marketing organization supporting worldwide offices? Kosiorek reflected on the process that led him to select ActiveMedia.

MAINTAINING BRAND INTEGRITY

Kosiorek pointed out that the digital media assets — graphics, videos, photographs, presentations, logos, brochures, press releases, product demonstrations, source application files, etc. — that flow through a company’s marketing communications supply chain is at the core of all business processes. “My goal was to centrally manage the assets on a global level, so authorized individuals across the enterprise could easily repurpose them for their local market needs,” he said.

Thus, Kosiorek identified that a centralized solution with asset version control would be a key requirement for maintaining TAC brand integrity. He had seen first hand the challenge inherent in controlling multiple brands when digital assets are dispersed throughout the enterprise, with no system for maintaining current versions or version history. A challenge he said that was made more difficult as TAC acquired companies and expanded into new countries and territories as part of its global growth objectives.

DAM IS THE ANSWER

Kosiorek continued that this corporate marketing-controlled central repository would form the core of an enterprise-wide DAM system that would give disparate global team members secure, self-service, on demand access to approved creative assets and thus automatically integrate these assets into streamlined TAC business procedures.

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-Jeff Kosiorek, senior manager of corporate marketing and communications, TAC

To help put his vision in context, Kosiorek said, “I wanted the DAM system to enable field staff around the world to quickly locate and retrieve digital assets in the repository. But I also wanted to control which staff saw what assets and which staff had asset download privileges.”

EMPOWERING LOCAL MARKETERS

In Kosiorek’s vision, corporate marketing would give branches secure access to marketing files approved for use in their region. Such a system would eliminate the time and cost of physically shipping files on CD, as well as the resource demands of maintaining current content on File Transfer Protocol (FTP) sites. He also considered the possibility of print cost reduction. “If materials are available more readily in electronic format,” Kosiorek commented, “would marketing resources use digital files instead of needing everything in print?”

In addition to these hard costs, dispersed, hard-to-locate-and-distribute marketing assets contributed to potential missed deadlines, lost opportunity and the likelihood that field offices were using outdated materials. Kosiorek had concerns that remote offices would be more likely to use materials with inaccurate sales messaging or undersell new products because

powerful new features were not correctly highlighted in the older materials they might be using. Worse, he knew that expensive marketing materials were underutilized, and better accessibility through a self-service solution would improve the use of sales and marketing tools.

BUILDING A MORE AGILE BUSINESS

“But most importantly,” Kosiorek emphasized, “in terms of an agile business, such a system would empower local marketers with on demand access to corporate-approved layout files and require them only to make appropriate linguistic and cultural changes in accordance with their global brand guidelines.” Thus, the DAM system would support Kosiorek’s think globally, act locally mantra, by simultaneously allowing corporate marketing to maintain brand integrity, messaging and content globally, while enabling local marketers to do what they do best — communicate to the local customers and sales channels that they know best.

With a high-level vision of how a DAM system could enable TAC to achieve its global marketing goals, Kosiorek set out to select and deploy a system to make that vision a reality. His approach was methodical, practical and innovative.

THE CHOICE IS ACTIVEMEDIA

To evaluate DAM systems, Kosiorek broke down his think globally, act locally marketing vision into distinct business goals and the DAM system features and requirements needed to support each goal.

He also considered the fact that TAC corporate marketing could not assign additional administrative or information technology (IT) resources to this effort. After compiling a DAM evaluation criteria list and surveying the software vendor market, Kosiorek was immediately drawn to ActiveMedia’s robust support of his global marketing vision.

SIMPLIFYING WITH A HOSTED SERVICE

Kosiorek said that he deployed ActiveMedia as a hosted service, because it met the TAC requirement for a rapid, global deployment with no IT involvement. Kosiorek met with the ActiveMedia client services team several weeks prior to launch to perform business analysis and to develop a deployment project plan, a standard practice for all ActiveMedia hosted-service deployments.

RAPID ENTERPRISE DEPLOYMENT

With experience deploying complex digital marketing solutions, Kosiorek said, “I knew that the key to success was to engage users from the start.” Because he had solicited input from the regional marketing managers regarding DAM system requirements, Kosiorek said, “I had their instant buy-in about the decision to roll out the feature-rich ActiveMedia system to TAC regional branches.”

“Everyone was motivated and fully prepared to use ActiveMedia on launch day.”

-Jeff Kosiorek, senior manager of corporate marketing and communications, TAC

In partnership with the ActiveMedia services team, TAC configured the solution, which included populating the central repository with thousands of TAC digital marketing assets (photos, brochures, videos); defining the taxonomy for cataloging these assets; defining metadata labels (rich descriptions of assets); and, finally, setting user groups and privileges.

Once the system was fully operational, Kosiorek created and delivered a rich media kick-off presentation with assistance from the ActiveMedia services team. The rich media presentation was uploaded to ActiveMedia and delivered via secure email link directly from the system as an introduction to new system users.

THE RESULT?

Everyone was motivated and fully prepared to use ActiveMedia on launch day. Kosiorek credits this motivation and preparedness to the dedication of the client services team, ActiveMedia's familiar and easy-to-use browser interface, and his own decision to engage users from the beginning of the DAM system selection process. Kosiorek continued to engage users post-launch by encouraging marketing managers to provide feedback on a regular basis. Working with client services team, TAC continued to fine tune ActiveMedia to meet the specific needs of TAC users. Flawless deployment and open dialogue contributed to a strong user adoption rate. This enabled TAC to immediately reap the benefits of ActiveMedia and sparked a viral-like demand for system access by additional groups within TAC.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

Reflecting back on the DAM project's origin, Kosiorek said, "the primary cost drivers were related to the search for assets across the enterprise, network limitations, as well as the labor and shipping costs of moving large files through the marketing communications supply chain."

"TAC immediately began to save both time and money, improving utilization of marketing assets with tighter brand control."

-Jeff Kosiorek, senior manager of corporate marketing and communications, TAC

There were soft-cost issues that existed as well. In the past, dispersed marketing assets contributed to slower corporate marketing response to regional needs. Lack of field accessibility to these assets increased the likelihood that field offices were using outdated messaging or not using valuable new marketing materials.

SEEING THE SAVINGS

Today, a quick look at the improvements in TAC field support reveals that ActiveMedia addresses all four cost factors, and that TAC immediately began to save both time and money, improving worldwide use of marketing assets, while gaining tighter control of the brand.

Extremely satisfied, Kosiorek calculated that deploying ActiveMedia resulted in a savings of roughly \$250,000 in the first year alone. In addition, it has immediately revved up corporate marketing's support to field offices. Kosiorek credits self-service and content repurposing for the performance boost.

THE OLD WAY

"Before ActiveMedia," said Kosiorek, "managing source files was time consuming and costly." He explained that whenever the field team made a marketing support request, corporate support staff had to stop what they were doing to locate the

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required source files; use unreliable FTP interfaces to upload large (200MB or more) source files over the Internet to a FTP server; verify that file transmission was successful; and then notify the remote manager, who was tasked with locating the file on the FTP server and downloading it.

Alternately, staff would burn the files onto a CD or DVD and pay priority shipping for arrival at remote offices, in the best circumstances, late the next morning. "Every time these field marketing requests were made, this time-consuming process had to occur before any localization work could even begin," Kosiorek said. Worse yet, if the source file could not be located, the field manager might have to recreate the marketing asset from scratch, wasting time and money. In addition to cost implications, this raised the potential for missed deadlines and lost opportunity.

THE NEW WAY

Today, a field manager enjoys self-service access to immediately locate the corporate-approved source files in ActiveMedia using a Web browser. ActiveMedia allows users to browse graphical previews with helpful text descriptions and automatic search capabilities. Secure, self-service capabilities enable the field manager to simply download the file for rapid

localization and printing, saving precious time to market, ensuring brand accuracy and reducing costs. Easy access to an electronic version of collateral opens the door for additional savings through PDF email distribution of product brochures by sales teams rather than costly print materials.

Print fulfillment is still required, but the system provides efficiency gains for this process. There is no need to burn files to a CD for transporting to regional printers. Instead, a quick email to the local printer, containing a secure link back to the high-resolution compound document (Adobe InDesign®) source file or high-resolution PDF file in ActiveMedia completes the print fulfillment process without CD shipping costs, or other logistics.

THE DEMAND KEEPS GROWING

Kosiorek points to the viral-like demand for ActiveMedia access from additional groups within TAC as proof positive of a successful deployment. The estimated \$250,000 savings combined with the fact that Kosiorek was able to pull off this global deployment without using the resources of a busy IT department, leave no doubt that he made the right decision with ActiveMedia. He concludes that the user interface simplicity, easy administration and ActiveMedia launch expertise, have set TAC on a path for success and optimal ROI.

BUSINESS RESULTS

In addition to cost returns, their ActiveMedia implementation has had a positive “return on objectives” for TAC. Centralized marketing assets, standardized and improved processes, and self-service remote accessibility has streamlined the workflow associated with marketing fulfillment. All the while, Kosiorek feels TAC is better equipped to safeguard its brand on a global basis.

“The pressure of accountability is something every marketer feels. ActiveMedia is helping to relieve some of that pressure here at TAC..”

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“We are able to more effectively utilize our marketing support staff’s time, while providing more marketing tools to local markets quicker,” explained Kosiorek.

“The net result is faster overall time-to-market for our marketing programs with assurance that our materials are ‘on-brand’ on a global basis.”

INFORMED DECISIONS, BETTER BUDGETS

With the ability to report on system usage and asset download, TAC has more information about what marketing materials are most used, and in what markets they are in greatest demand. This hard data has already begun to help TAC marketing executives to make more informed decisions for budget allocation and cost-justifying the creation of additional marketing materials.

Kosiorek sums it up when he says, “The pressure of accountability is something every marketer feels. ActiveMedia is helping to relieve some of that pressure here at TAC.”