

# KM with Google: Real World Cases

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**C**onsider that every week, workers waste more than a full day (nearly 9 hours) searching for information, costing \$14,200 per employee per year.<sup>1</sup> They dig around on shared drives to locate data, or wait for colleagues to update team files. When the information is beyond reach—on a colleague's hard drive or in someone's head—more time is lost to

regenerate the data. Large investments are made for reports that contain the same information that already exists within corporate walls. All told, employees spend 20 minutes per day recreating information that already exists.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the emergence of unified messaging and seamless mobility, the reality is

that information access and collaboration still cause headaches. Synching the data in mobile devices with workplace desktops has its share of problems, and navigating through the various enterprise software systems—from Microsoft's to Oracle's—can be frustrating. No doubt, these systems have plenty of features, but making the systems talk to each other can be a challenge.

Companies usually begin by trying out one tool and finding that the value created inspires them to adopt multiple tools, which is where the transformation occurs. In 2002, Google introduced the Google Search Appliance (GSA), a tool designed to search enterprise content. Upon this foundation, Google introduced its suite of email and collaboration tools, Google Apps, in 2007. The GSA takes the familiar utility of Google web search into the realm of the enterprise space. Google Apps include email and instant-messaging, calendar and document-creation tools, and a suite of collaboration platforms—from shared documents to video.

## Taking Teamwork to the Next Level

### **The Business:**

Considered by some to be the founder of the biotechnology industry, Genentech has been in the biotech business for more than 30 years. Headquartered in south San Francisco, the company uses human genetic information to discover, develop, manufacture and commercialize medicines to treat patients with serious or life-threatening medical conditions.

### **The Challenge:**

In the past, Genentech had separate mail and calendar systems, causing a user experience that was "fragmented and frustrating," according to staff. The company used Microsoft Outlook alongside an Oracle calendar system, a limiting combination for Genentech's 11,000 employees. The systems could handle a maximum of three months' history while users wanted at least a year, creating frequent crashes, especially in December when many users were inputting events for the next year.

### **The Solution:**

Genentech's principals knew they needed a system that allowed the staff to find data more quickly and efficiently than their current tools allowed. Andy Wang, Genentech's senior systems architect, noted that typical MS Office users only used 10%-20% of the software's features. Genentech's usage was no different, but Wang and his team decided to deploy a "frictionless" and more "cohesive" system. Genentech researchers were being slowed by problems controlling versions of documents created via the Office suite of applications, and mobile users had difficulty accessing the documents.

They deployed Google Apps and Google Docs to provide a "lightweight" and "easy to use" system. So far, 20% of Genentech content is in repositories created through these tools, and before too long Wang expects

that 80% of content will be. Mobile users can find the data they need, and most importantly, making back-up documents is easier. It allows users to save their data for reference, always keeping the most recent version on top.

### **The Results:**

The relatively low price point translates into significant cost savings. While the cost equation is important, it's the functionality that has been most impressive. They no longer need to route edited versions repeatedly through email, quashing worries about which version is which and whether the right people have the right one. Users can edit a document "live," simultaneously with their colleagues. The process makes collaboration remarkably efficient.

Research studies confirm that fully engaged employees generate higher quality content and create a culture that fosters stronger collaboration.<sup>3</sup> Such facts make it clear that engaged employees drive more revenue and generate measurably greater business productivity.<sup>4</sup> No doubt, engagement at Genentech is on the rise. More than 7,000 of the company's 11,000 employees use the new system on a weekly basis, even though Genentech's IT department has not actively promoted its use.

The enterprise tools are proving useful as Genentech grows. The company recently merged with another pharmaceutical giant, Roche Group, creating a flood of information that needed to be distributed to people stationed all over the world. Video (in this case Google Video) has come to the rescue, Wang says. Researchers from different parts of the merged company share content. Human resources departments have used video for organizational announcements, employee training and the dissemination of important corporate policies. In each case, video has streamlined the process "without having to pay some production company \$100K," Wang says.