



Case Study.

Digital First Media Customer Success Story

Business Challenges:

Digital First Media is a leader in local, multi-platform news and information, distinguished by its original content and high quality, diversified portfolio of local media assets. Digital First Media is the second largest newspaper company in the United States by circulation, serving an audience of over 40 million readers on a monthly basis. The Company's portfolio of products includes 67 daily newspapers and 180 non-daily publications. Digital First Media has a leading local news audience share in each of its primary markets and its content monetization platforms serve clients on both a national and local scale.

Situation

A company which has grown through acquisition, DFM has also acquired many systems along the way, including multiple email platforms. The reality of this splintered IT environment became clear when a new CEO joined the company and was unable to easily send an email to all employees. Dealing with multiple communications tools was making it tough to integrate new employees and companies into the DFM family. It was also a significant burden on IT to manage multiple platforms.

Solution

The DFM IT team evaluated three different platforms for the new corporate email system, ultimately selecting Google's G Suite platform, which includes Gmail, Docs, Drive, Calendars and Hangouts. Factors which went into the decision included Google's ease of use and collaboration benefits, says Bob Kinney, VP of Information Technology for DFM's Western region.

"We had all these business units and properties that didn't work together across the country," Kinney says. "People couldn't share calendars or contacts and we knew that for sales and revenue departments, this was extremely important." Google Docs would also be beneficial for collaboration amongst all employees. During employee feedback sessions, the company surmised that roughly 50% of its people were already using Google for personal communications. The decision to go Google was further supplemented by an excellent reference from the State of Colorado, which had recently transitioned to Google Docs.

Working with SADA

SADA Systems, a Google Cloud Premier Partner and an expert implementation partner for Google Cloud solutions, came on board to help DFM migrate to G Suite. The SADA team provided a comprehensive Transformation Lab to providing guidance on reengineering and improving of business processes with Google Cloud. The DFM implementation team headed by Eric Monsma, Director of IT Operations for DFM incorporated SADA's change management framework. This involves identifying employees to serve as Google Guides, subject matter expert resources for employees during the transition. Monsma, in concert with SADA's change management team, led demos and trainings at all of the company's offices around the country. "Identifying our Google Guides was critical to the success of our rollout. These guides received a more in-depth training with



digitalfirst
M E D I A

Client:

Digital First Media

Website:

<http://www.digitalfirstmedia.com/>

Organization Size:

6,000+

Country or Region:

United States

Industry:

Media

SADA Service(s):

Consulting, Migration, Deployment, Change Management

Customer Profile:

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DFM IT and SADA. It gave them the necessary tools and ideas on streamlining business processes. They were ambassadors for IT and promoted the Google tools to their individual departments," Monsma says.

Other change management best practices included Lunch and Learn events; the creation of an internal website to house training videos, FAQs and other materials; and staggered communications prior to migration to help employees prepare for the Go Live date.

"The Lunch and Learns sessions we held had great attendance and sparked good, creative dialogue between different departments. We all learned about G-Suite together. We showed everyone how easily the tools worked in conjunction with each other. A daily reminder went out to employees starting two weeks prior to launch and made it a very smooth transition at Go Live. Creating an internal training Google site proved to be beneficial for employee's to reference at their leisure and employees could dive deeper into one particular tool that they may not have fully grasped in the live sessions as these resources were set up as self-paced trainings with exercise files to go through the motions as users found time," Monsma says.

Yet, there are always challenges during a major project; SADA worked closely with DFM's team to address situations unique to the company. "We are a company of journalists, so changing people's email and telling them that they cannot share files publicly for security reasons was bound to create a good deal of pushback," Kinney says. "Some people were scared to death that they would lose years of notes and interviews or that their contacts wouldn't transfer over."

While the change management team assured employees that those scenarios wouldn't occur, they did need to address the need for employees to share documents with people outside of the company. The solution involved deploying G Suite Business and two-factor authentication, which allowed for an improved level of controls for the enterprise to further secure access to documents as well as having unlimited storage capacity.

Results

Working with SADA, DFM successfully transitioned all 5000 employees, as well as partners and service providers, to Google, constituting 6100 user accounts. Employees are benefiting from a single, online email system to more easily connect with anyone in the company, share contacts and schedule meetings from any device. Other outcomes of the migration include:

Application and infrastructure cost avoidance: Today, DFM has avoided the cost of upgrading and maintaining servers and software for email, calendars, and word processing. DFM also expects to avoid new data storage equipment costs, by using Google Team Drive as an alternative storage solution.

Partner Profile:

SADA Systems, an award-winning Google Cloud Premier Partner, provides business and technology consultancy and related services that transform organizations through innovative cloud-based solutions.

Employee onboarding: New employees of acquired companies can integrate into the parent company much faster, which boosts productivity and morale, says Kinney. He relates DFM's purchase of the Orange County Register, which was in bankruptcy at the time of the deal. This meant that DFM had a short window to onboard the Register's 850 employees to meet deal closing deadlines. "SADA helped us streamline the process through plug-ins and Google forms so that we were able to onboard those new employees in 72 hours. This was a relief for corporate management, yet also gave those new employees a positive feeling that they were joining a digitally-savvy company."

Maximizing investment in collaboration: Employees are expanding their use of Google technologies such as Google Hangouts and Google Docs. DFM plans to work more closely with SADA Systems on increasing awareness and usage for the full Google portfolio, including Forms and Sites.

"We held two Google Transformation Labs in 2016 which gathered open-minded individuals from different departments from DFM to brainstorm how to leverage G Suite in our daily work lives," Monsma says. SADA facilitated the Labs in Boulder, Colo. and Mountain View, Calif.

"These two sessions sparked some good conversations and gave people new ideas on how to solve legacy business processes within DFM. Keeping the Google momentum and excitement is important to us," Monsma says

A roadmap for the cloud: As DFM progresses on its journey to becoming a modern, digital publishing company, IT sees cloud computing taking on a broader role. "We definitely want to look at Google Cloud for hosting our environment and for projects involving machine learning," Kinney says. "This could be really useful for market research and advertising, which is an exciting part of our business."

Kinney calls the company's new Google environment a "tremendous success."

"Moving everyone to the Google Cloud allows us to be nimble and do acquisitions and onboarding faster and more easily, along with divesting papers when needed. SADA has been an instrumental partner for us, both from technical expertise and change management. They are available whenever we need them for consultative and support services, and we have a great working relationship with their team," said Bob Kinney, VP of Information Technology for DFM's Western region.

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