

Case Study



New Online Community Network Solution for Leading Public Sector Organisation

Background

CO2Sense Yorkshire was established by Yorkshire Forward to support all businesses in the region; helping them to reduce carbon emissions and improve resource efficiency, whilst at the same time supporting business growth.

Through the development of bespoke carbon reduction strategies, CO2Sense Yorkshire helps organisations to develop initiatives that reduce their carbon emissions. Typical initiatives include:

- The introduction of low carbon products
- Increased recycling
- A reduction in waste generation
- Helping businesses access low carbon energy
- Helping to adapt business strategies to align with the effects of climate change
- Investing in business



Current Problems

CO2Sense employ Project Managers who offer advice and practical guidance on how businesses can reduce their carbon emissions. The limitation with this business model was that each engagement generated a wealth of knowledge which was hard to promote widely. CO2Sense wanted to be able to translate the information and lessons learned from each project to a larger targeted audience in their region.

Due to the ongoing nature of the relationships CO2Sense have with local businesses, they required a solution which could provide longer term support. The natural solution was to create an online community network – one which could be provided quickly and efficiently, allowing CO2Sense Yorkshire to harbour and nurture their long lasting customer relationships

New System Requirements

The vision was to be able to host information so that their customers could easily develop their own high levels of awareness, understanding and engagement, whilst at the same time providing a platform to which businesses could share knowledge and network with other businesses in the region; all at a low cost and low level of management to CO2Sense.

New System Requirements (continued)

Once CO2Sense identified their requirements they began planning the project. Their goal was to create a collection of special interest online communities. They wanted to create a number of highly relevant micro-sites where Yorkshire businesses could source detailed information and engage with experts or other businesses. Each community would consist of network members, forums, blogs, expert content and file libraries. Some networks would be invitation only, whilst others should be open for all to view and contribute. The target audience for each network would vary from a restricted group of 4-5 businesses establishing a project, to an open group about wood recycling (for example) with many different members.



Once CO2Sense identified their requirements they piloted an Online Networks model, which proved the concept and underpinned the business case. In order to realise the full potential, CO2Sense wanted to improve and modernise the solution.

CO2Sense created a clear list of requirements for the Online Networks project:

- Content must be dynamic by nature; collaborative, creative and engaging
- Creation of a ‘spontaneous’ channel of information - which should be different from the main CO2Sense website content
- Enhanced user experience; straight-forward and intuitive to use
- Sustainable environment: A self-sustaining community of network members, adding content and sharing best practice peer to peer
- Stimulus for all types of businesses/organisations to contribute
- Sharing of tools/techniques from members
- Management of the Open Networks must be efficient and intuitive:
 - User friendly for back office users
 - Rapid deployment of new networks at minimal cost
 - Helping users to shift their behaviour in order to realise the benefits from the Online Networks
 - New member recruitment - simple and straight forward

CO2Sense predominantly offer their services offline and it was therefore an essential requirement that the Online Networks supported and enhanced these processes rather than provided an alternative. The solution was therefore integrated into internal systems such as their CRM, which is core to the CO2Sense business process.

Jeanine Willoughby – CO2Sense Yorkshire Online Networks Project Manager

“Business support organisations need to deliver more with less. Silverbear assisted CO2Sense to benefit from the explosion of consumer collaboration and networking solutions; enabling this toolkit to be available for business support”

New System Requirements (continued)

The project has evaluated the common mechanisms delivering business support – given the continued drive of “delivering more for less” and that businesses themselves are often most trusted by their peers, Silverbear have helped CO2Sense deliver fundamental change. The team now facilitate business support amongst communities, in addition to the traditional view that they are the experts imparting their knowledge one to one.

Why Silverbear & Telligent?

CO2Sense received a large volume of bids from a range of suppliers (including the incumbent supplier). However the bid from Silverbear and their partner Telligent, stood out in a number of ways. Andy Hartley, CO2Sense Yorkshire Operations Director, explains “We were impressed with Silverbear and the Telligent technology for three reasons:



1. *Silverbear’s strategy experience and expertise demonstrated a clearer understanding and vision.*
2. *Silverbear demonstrated to CO2Sense that the specification phase was key to success and must be managed effectively.*
3. *Silverbear illustrated their integration pedigree and thorough understanding of CO2Sense vision, through the connection with Telligent.”*

The Telligent technology is an external-facing community application enabling organisations to listen, understand and improve their engagement with their community. The Telligent Community solution provides a synergy between traditional communication with CO2Sense customers and the now widely-used social networking tools. Silverbear recommended Telligent technology to CO2Sense due to the ease of use, speed of deployment and focus on collaboration

Andy Hartley – CO2Sense Yorkshire Operations Director

“The Silverbear recommendations, blending commercial techniques with their understanding of the public sector, were probably more radical than expected and we were pushed outside of our comfort zone. However Silverbear provided the confidence required and integrated Telligent Community to our other systems.”

Outcome

The CO2Sense Yorkshire requirement was challenging but successful due to the senior management buy-in and willingness to invest effort towards the goal of success.

The first deliverable provided by Silverbear was a “Statement of Work”. This captured the blueprint of CO2Sense Yorkshire’s requirements and included items such as the overall objectives, specific measures and business processes. This document was produced as a result of, interactive workshops between the CO2Sense team and Silverbear. This document outlined key areas in which bespoke tailoring of the solution was required to provide the required functionality:

Outcome (continued)

- Requirement 1:** Reconciliation of customers and their engagement across the website and the CRM systems
- Requirement 2:** Integration of an online event system (evocos) to the website and CRM system
- Requirement 3:** Branding & usability requirements balancing the capabilities of social networking with the target audience

Solution In Action

There are very few successful networks of this type in the public sector. For this reason, the CO2Sense Online Networks are now deemed as reference sites and case studies for public sector online networking.

CO2Sense anticipate the Online Networks will bring the following benefits for business:

- Increasing peer-to-peer learning through all members contributing and imparting their knowledge to the relevant networks
- Creating awareness amongst individuals with a common objective and competency
- Increasing collaboration between members as more targeted information and events are posted onto the networks, allowing groups of members to collaborate to meet defined objectives
- Enhancing networking capabilities through the introduction of resource centres and libraries through featured articles and blogs
- Making it easier to facilitate opportunities and encouraging sustainable long-term partnerships



Future Plans

Silverbear's partnership approach extends to the high level of support and services they offer to all their customers. This approach has given CO2Sense the vision to plan for future connections and tools for the solution and they have already started to enhance the communication and engagement levels on resource efficiency within the region.

Future plans include:

- The overlap of the Online Networks with one another and with external networks (e.g. sharing profiles with consumer social networking sites)
- Enhanced network tools to support regional Local Authorities
- Increased use of the CRM by Project Managers to have a complete view of regional businesses, their offline interaction with CO2Sense and their participation in the Online Networks

Andy Hartley – CO2Sense Yorkshire Operations Director

"The Online Networks project was my first experience of a major IT project being delivered to spec within timeframe and cost"

Future Plans (continued)

- Developing new networks to reflect all CO2Sense priority sectors
- Online and offline marketing to increase awareness and involvement

The Online Networks underpins the funding and specialist activity by extending CO2Sense’s reach within their region. The Network has brought the voice and experience of the businesses involved in the projects to a wider audience, facilitating business sharing outside CO2Sense direct intervention.



Jeanine Willoughby – CO2Sense Yorkshire Online Networks Project Manager

“Silverbear had a very good understanding of what we needed; they then delivered the results anticipated. Silverbear have committed to their methodology and we have witnessed the benefits from this”

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Featured

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1 hour ago by [Jeanine Willoughby](#)
This section contains a series of 'How to...' guides designed to help you get started on the networks. From editing your profile to joining a network, these step-by-step guides will help you through the process. Don't forget, if you can't find the help you're looking for, ask your question in our forum.

Welcome to your Food and Drink Network

1 hour ago by [Jeanine Willoughby](#)
Hi folks, I'm Andy Lowe, the Food and Drink Project Manager at CO2Sense, and I manage this Network. Have a look around, add any useful topics for...

2. Find a Plastic Recycler

3 hours ago by [Jeanine Willoughby](#)
An estimated 133,000 tonnes of plastic film and 94,000 tonnes of rigid plastics are being landfilled annually from commercial and industrial sources in...



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