Celina Insurance Group

Social collaboration from the IBM SmartCloud Engage suite improves IT and business processes

Overview

The need
As a smaller business competing against larger firms, Celina Insurance Group needed a cost-effective way to simplify its IT infrastructure and improve its collaborative capabilities.

The solution
Celina deployed the IBM® SmartCloud® Engage suite, an integrated dashboard that delivers IBM's social platform, native mobile apps and other collaborative tools from the cloud.

The benefit
Software as a service (SaaS) simplifies IT administration, while social collaboration improves project management and the engagement of employees and business partners with the enterprise.

Celina Insurance Group comprises four mutual property and casualty insurance companies. Celina underwrites auto, home, motorcycle, vacant property, business and farm insurance in the midwestern United States. Headquartered in Celina, Ohio, the company has some 170 employees.

Honing a competitive edge
Celina sells insurance through a network of 500 independent agents. These agents can choose to do business with other carriers, many of them far larger than Celina. The company differentiates itself with responsive online processes and instant messaging (IM), all powered by IBM software on-premises.

To sharpen the company's competitive edge, Celina's executives analyzed the merits of different IT delivery methods and whether social collaboration could improve its business processes and service to agents. Of special interest were cloud-based social tools that could help document corporate knowledge and attract younger workers.

Cloud-based software can help smaller companies compete against larger rivals. "IBM SmartCloud Engage is a great thing for smaller and midsize companies. We get all the functionality that larger companies have without the hardware, administration and headaches of on-premises IT," says Rob Shoenfelt, chief information officer at Celina Insurance Group.
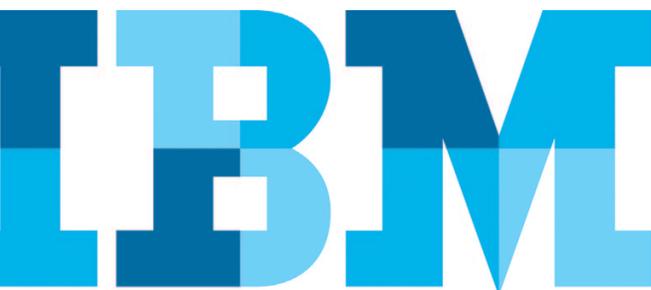
Collaboration from the cloud

This led Celina in mid-2013 to IBM SmartCloud Engage services for social collaboration. The suite includes the same IM from IBM Sametime® software that Celina hosts on-premises, while adding a social platform, native mobile apps and collaborative tools.

Cloud-based services are easier to manage than on-premises IT, and the entire toolset costs about the same as on-premises IM alone. Thus, Celina regards the social tools as a bonus.. The company uses the tools in project management and to facilitate collaboration among staff and business partners. In the future, Celina plans to extend instant online meetings and other tools to its agents.

Efficient IT and better processes

Celina anticipates meaningful business benefits from the IBM SmartCloud Engage platform. Cloud-based IM is expected to make it easier for the IT team to manage, and the included social tools will help stretch the IT budget. Social tools such as wikis to set project scope and events for scheduling improve project management, while file sharing lessens reliance on email. Employees and business partners engage in productive dialogs by sharing in communities, forums and other social venues. Celina has improved its vendor relationships through social collaboration, and the company provides its board of directors with a cloud-based portal to improve interactions.

Solution components

Software
- IBM® Sametime®
- IBM SmartCloud® Engage

For more information

To learn more about IBM SmartCloud Engage and IBM Sametime software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites:
- **ibm.com**/software/products/ibmsame
- **ibm.com**/software/products/ibm-smartcloud-engage