

BT adapts to a new phase of globalization

British Telecom, UK



Collaborative solutions from SMART changed the culture of the company positively.

Globalization has redefined the modern economy; it offers growth and opportunity but also demands a new way of working. As a company that serves customers in more than 170 countries, BT recognizes that it must improve business agility to generate efficiencies and improve operational and environmental performance. To achieve this, BT Innovate & Design (BTID) has embarked on a Global Development Centre (GDC) Programme that embeds collaborative solutions from SMART.

The Challenge

Central to BT's growth ambitions BTID is responsible for building all the systems and networks used by BT. These systems are built by end to end project teams that have adopted the agile development methodology. Collectively these teams are responsible for development that enables BT to drive towards its strategic goal of being 'Number One for Customer Service'. The adoption of agile development practices requires a new type of environment, especially as the teams are geographically dispersed across the UK, India, China, USA and Central Europe. BTID realized that it needed a new environment where both layout and technology supports agile delivery.

"The idea was influenced by information from Google, Gartner Group and Microsoft, as well as research into understanding how people actually collaborate. We also researched interactive environments that are conducive to dynamic and positive decision-making. We knew some form of telepresence was required and evaluated a range of technologies and software, all of which supported some of our vision," says Bola Oshisanwo, director, Agile Development Centre. "Our developers tend to work in groups around a white board and research revealed that they want to interact with and see what their colleagues are writing on the boards, and not their faces. At that point we knew our solution must support this way of working while connecting teams that are spread across multiple locations."

Challenge

Find a solution to support the company's way of working while connecting teams that are spread across multiple locations.

Solution

BT installed within five months 17 SMART Board® interactive whiteboards at Adastral Park, one interactive whiteboard each in Belfast and Glasgow, and two in India.

Result

The new SMART collaboration capability enables people to meet, regardless of where they are in the world and interact as if they were in the same room. This has had a massive impact on travel costs and reduced the carbon footprint significantly.

The Solution

“BT’s research culminated in the complete redesign of the agile development teams working environment and included the adoption of SMART Technologies’ collaborative solution. It started with a proof of concept at Adastral Park, BT’s centre for development in Ipswich. The initial pilot project was conceived and implemented within five months, involving 200 people and 17 SMART Board® interactive whiteboards at Adastral Park, one interactive whiteboard each in Belfast and Glasgow, and two interactive whiteboards in India. End to end development teams were selected to occupy the new space. Desks were arranged so that people on chairs could easily slide between them, monitors were placed on swivel arms, and each team of 12 has its own interactive whiteboard, circular meeting table, and IP video and audio conferencing capabilities.

“People were wowed by the SMART Board interactive whiteboards initially but quickly snapped back into old habits,” says Bola. “It became clear that this was because they didn’t understand the capability of the technology, so we designed a training package which was delivered to a critical mass of people over a short period of time. The training was based on observing what people did day-to-day. The training focused on helping the team to incorporate the interactive whiteboard and collaborative working into their day-to-day work.”

The Result

The proof of concept was so successful, BT Innovate & Design set up a programme to manage the deployment of the solution to five Agile Development Centres worldwide. The next stage of the project has seen deployment of the solution to Dallas, Adastral Park, BTID’s headquarters in London and to Pune in India, enabling a further 700 people to work more effectively. Bola comments: “The successful delivery of a customer solution relies upon the effective collaboration between people across BT. Our new SMART collaboration capability enables people to meet, regardless of where they are in the world and interact as if they were in the same room. This has had a massive impact on travel costs and reduced our carbon footprint significantly. Last week I trained 34 people in India from Adastral Park and yesterday I trained a further eight – that’s a saving of a flight to India, plus my time, in just two weeks.”

In another instance, by using the new SMART collaboration tools, a group of five developers were able to resolve a problem within two days rather than travel to India for five days. This has clear implications for people satisfaction, staff retention and work life balance, as well as reducing travel costs and carbon footprint. “Ultimately we’re using this technology to change and transform the culture of the company,” explains Alan Bateman, the director for Next Generation Engineering. “What started as a project at Adastral Park has led to plans for a network of five global development centres worldwide, all adopting the same blueprint and all specifically designed to accelerate and improve the quality of our development.” He concludes, “BT is dedicated to helping customers thrive in a changing world. We understand the power of technology to achieve this and believe SMART Technologies has a pivotal role to play.”



BT plans a network of five global development centres worldwide.

“The successful delivery of a customer solution relies upon the effective collaboration between people across BT. Our new SMART collaboration capability enables people to meet, regardless of where they are in the world, and interact as if they were in the same room. This has had a massive impact on travel costs and reduced our carbon footprint significantly. Last week I trained 34 people in India from Adastral Park and yesterday I trained a further eight - that’s a saving of a flight to India, plus my time, in just two weeks.”

Bola Oshisanwo,

Director, Agile Development Centre

About SMART

SMART Technologies is a leading provider of collaboration solutions that transform the way the world works and learns. We believe that collaboration and interaction should be easy. As the global leader in interactive whiteboards, we bring more than two decades of collaboration research and development to a broad range of easy-to-use, integrated solutions that free people from their desks and computer screens, so collaborating and learning with digital resources are more natural.

Steljes Ltd

Steljes is a SMART authorised distributor for SMART Technologies

info@steljes.co.uk

08450 724 800

www.SMARTmeetings.co.uk