



Case Study

Douglas Stewart Co., Inc.



"MindManager is fast becoming a valuable tool in education, and it does not appear to be at the expense of other software publishers."

ROI

Reduce by 30 percent the time needed to create post-meeting reports; improve the quality and efficiency of post-meeting forms; develop action items 25 percent faster. Improve sales team's ability to think strategically about customer relationships, manage information and ideas, and engage customers in creative problem solving.

Company Profile

The Douglas Stewart Company is a worldwide leader in providing innovative, turnkey solutions for manufacturers and software publishers, as well as the preferred supplier to thousands of academic resellers. Its portfolio includes more than 10,000 of the diverse products requested daily by students, faculty, and staff of K-12 and higher education institutions across North America.

Challenge

- Increase sales team's ability to think creatively
- Manage complex information more effectively
- Better engage with customers to drive success of the reseller community

Information/Meeting Management, Strategic Planning

The nation's leading education technology distributor finds a ready market for Mindjet MindManager software among its resellers—and with its own sales team.

Douglas Stewart Co., Inc., the largest distributor of education-related technology in North America, began representing Mindjet in September 2005. Upon first seeing the company's MindManager software, Douglas Stewart executives knew it had a strong new product offering for the market it serves. What president and COO Scott Bukolt did not expect was how readily MindManager would be adopted inside Douglas Stewart itself.

"Rarely," Bukolt says, "do we acquire a partnership with a new software publisher where almost instantly our sales staff not only understands the product's differentiating features, but become avid power users almost overnight."

Mapping improved customer relationships

Douglas Stewart's acting sales manager, Chris McLean, says that part of the reason MindManager has been received so well by his team is that the software fits so well into the sales model Douglas Stewart has created.

"Douglas Stewart's expectation of our account managers is that they have a thorough understanding of each of the resellers we serve," McLean says. "Managers are required to create annual account plans, develop an in-depth strategic landscape of their customers and develop business plans and multi-level marketing plans to help bring the company's relationship with the customer to a higher level."

When he first saw MindManager, McLean says, he knew immediately that it could help his managers create and manage this kind of complexity. To get them quickly thinking in the same direction, he initiated a mapping competition among team members. The goal was to both get them familiar with a product they were about to start selling, and to introduce MindManager as way to improve their own work processes.

"We got a lot of excitement from the account managers, and that momentum has continued on," he says. "Some managers immediately started using it to brainstorm new reseller initiatives and create strategic plans. Others went the route of using it as a demonstration tool for their resellers—simultaneously showing them both the product itself and how different job titles within education could greatly benefit from using it."

"Many of our sales people are now using MindManager for presentations instead of PowerPoint, as well as using it to plan tactical account management," says COO Bukolt. "Mindjet is now on everyone's call agenda—and sometimes seems to be presented with as much energy as product lines with many times the sales volume."

Easily created, easily organized views of complex account information

Douglas Stewart account manager Kevin Kuluvar says he initially used MindManager as a sort of nonlinear outliner. But the more he learned about the software, the more of a power user he has become. "Once I learned that I could link my Outlook contacts right into these visual maps of customer information, I really started to expand my use of the software."

Kuluvar now uses maps to gain a very efficient, interactive view of account information. In the same document, he can visually map out account plans, attach or link to documents and files located on his network as well as to web sites, emails and email addresses, and data from his customer database. He can also set due dates, assign resources and set alerts. He routinely draws on MindManager's extensive library of visual icons to indicate percent complete and priorities, and to reveal at a glance (using icons such as red or green flags, stop signs, bombs or smiley faces) the status of his tasks.

Solution

Equip the sales team with Mindjet MindManager to enable them to build clear, flexible, interactive and content-rich portals of customer information and planning.

Product

Mindjet MindManager

Result

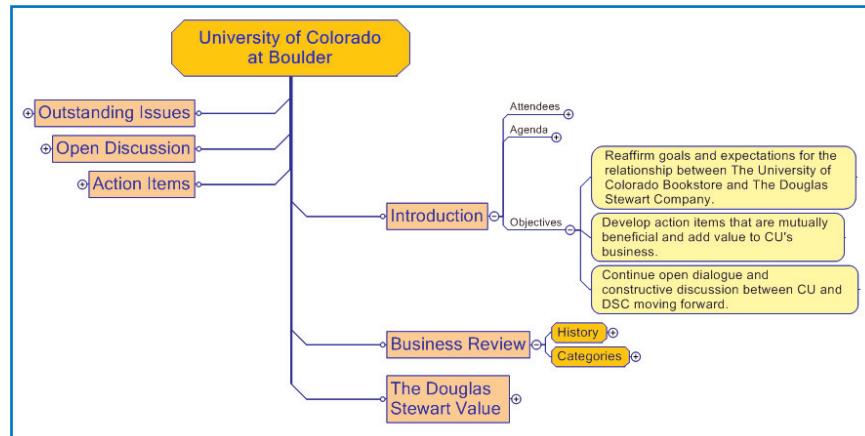
- More efficient, creative brainstorming and planning
- Better view of account information; more information at users' fingertips
- Improved ability to engage in real-time collaboration with the reseller community

The net result is a unique document that gives him both a high level, immediately understood overview of each account, as well as the ability to quickly drill down deep into the details he has embedded in the map.

“Once I have used the map to help me think through what I want to do,” Kuluvar says, “I can export that specific account plan into a Word template and give it to my management for review.” (Some Douglas Stewart executives, such as sales manager McLean, actually prefer to receive these account plans as maps since a map is much easier to review and annotate than standard multi-page text documents.)

Preparing for, then running the perfect customer meeting

Recently, Bukolt and Kuluvar used MindManager in an off-site meeting with one of Douglas Stewart's key customers, the University of Colorado. Kuluvar says that prior to the meeting, he and Bukolt used the software to brainstorm new ideas about how best to work with the university to help grow its on-campus book store and computer center. Then Bukolt and Kuluvar used the map to run the meeting and present their ideas directly to the university.



Strategic planning with Mindjet MindManager

“The interesting thing—the real breakthrough MindManager provides—is that it enables us to essentially extend our initial creative brainstorming right into the meeting with the customer,” Kuluvar says. “Unlike slide presentations where it’s basically a one-way information flow, MindManager enabled us to really open up a dialog with the university: ‘This is the value we bring to the university. Here are some of the marketing programs we would like to do with the university. How can we help you continue to serve your students, faculty and administration?’ We capture their feedback right into the map and together build a solution in real time that works for all of us. Instead of having to schedule a series of meetings, we can get an incredible amount of work done in just one—working together in real time to do some powerful creative thinking and problem solving.”

Putting ideas into action—immediately

Kuluvar also points out that since meeting notes are captured right into the map, he can distribute the notes to all participants within minutes of the end of the meeting. (Such notes can be delivered as a MindManager map, web site, Word document, PowerPoint slides, Outlook tasks—even as a Microsoft Project chart or Visio diagram. They can also be shared using the free MindManager Viewer.)

“Following the meeting,” Kuluvar says, “Scott [Bukolt] and I sat down, accessed our corporate VPN, and immediately starting assigning action items from the map to our internal team. And as we move forward with the university, the map we created at this meeting will become the core of our subsequent work. The MindManager map will serve as a portal to all the disparate, normally disconnected information that will help us make the university bookstore and computer center as successful as possible.”

“While the software business is always changing,” Bukolt says, “truly incremental applications are rare. MindManager is fast becoming a valuable tool in education, and it does not appear to be at the expense of other software publishers. We are delighted to be working with this exciting and relatively new company on a global level.”



To find out how other leading organizations have benefited from Mindjet MindManager, visit www.mindjet.com/casestudies.

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