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SAP AG



Vera Geier, Head of Enterprise Collaboration on Internal Enterprise Social Business Strategy

Prior to the Social Business Collaboration 2013 we spoke with Vera Geier, Head of Enterprise Collaboration at SAP AG Germany.

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In your opinion what are the main current challenges and trends regarding collaboration, internal communication facilitation, platform design and management?

Vera Geier: Most companies, especially big organizations, are struggling with content fragmentation and numerous silo solutions caused by technology-focused collaboration approaches. It is quite a challenge to find experts who are inspired to answer questions and collaborate in finding working solutions. A very frequent issue is having different communication standards and behaviors employed in the organization. Beyond that, getting people across organizations engaged through for example best-practice sharing is a tough challenge for nearly any company. Overall, it is a huge task to get collaboration to be considered an important competency of the general job-function. I often find it an additional striking matter to overcome cultural impediments and organizational constraints, e.g. through leading-by-example. Organizations generally lack the integration of collaboration into the core business processes and systems. Collaboration needs to happen where people work! Lastly, there is often too much noise (i.e. waste) generated in collaborative solutions.

we.CONECT:

How is your company reacting to these challenges? What future potential do you see?

Vera Geier: We designed a Knowledge Company Strategy and Program which is focusing on an integrated Knowledge Management (landscape & processes).

we.CONECT: **What projects are you currently working on regarding collaboration? What particularity do these projects possess?**

Vera Geier: We have various ongoing projects to integrate collaboration deeply into SAP's core business processes, such as CRM, HR and Development, but also into SAPs Web / KM landscape. Focus audiences are internal employees, but also the engagement of customers, partners and prospects.

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Please describe in brief the presentation you will be holding at the Social Business Collaboration 2013.

Vera Geier: The session is about an Integrated Knowledge Management strategy with a special focus on collaboration (success) projects: Collaboration, Information & Learning are core knowledge management pillars along a company's value chain. An organization with an open mindset and the willingness to share knowledge and experiences internally and externally is truly enabled to achieve results faster. Success is largely about creating a positive (integrated) experience for end-users reflecting on their individual preferences: I am most interested in Collaboration for accomplishing and succeeding together, I need truly great information that is easy to find and meaningful to me, I need to access continuous learning when I want and educate myself how I know best.

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What are the key challenges of your project?

Vera Geier: We are running a cross-business project - Therefore the alignment between various stakeholders is very time-consuming and sometimes challenging. In addition, Budget and Executive Sponsorship requires a lot of strategic visioning.

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What is your theory about peer networks? What can they do?

Vera Geier: The people network is extremely important to enable social business. People networks are more powerful than content. If a company is facing strategic changes, e.g. need to develop a new product, a fast knowledge exchange across the internal value chain is a key success factor. Therefore it is important that people find the right information and easy access to experts to collaborate and ask questions and get answers where ever they work. Today, technology is available but many companies are suffering from their organizational fragmentation which leads to knowledge silos and jumping between knowledge tools. Expert knowledge is in all areas, but not transparent to the broader audience. Also, people are not recognized when sharing best practices through social media.

we.CONECT:

What expectations do you have towards the Social Business Collaboration 2013? What outcome and benefit do you expect from the exchange with participating companies?

Vera Geier: It's always great to exchange best practices and use-cases. All companies and organizations are different but I know they are all struggling with the challenges of collaboration. I am looking forward to discussing various solution approaches and a fruitful dialogue with great minds that have a passion for the topic

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What positioning and vision does SAP have with regard to their knowledge management?



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leveraging technology-driven innovation. They all continue to be relevant ingredients of our company success.

To quote our vice president, Dirk Dobiey: "With SAP's tradition as a software and software-related services company it can be very tempting to only look at the technology side of things, but today SAP is a solutions company solving business problems to make the world run better and improve people's lives. This move towards integrated solutions for our customers, which makes our offerings much easier and less expensive to consume, requires a continued best practice approach to knowledge management where everyone is enabled and empowered to perform, and networked to succeed internally and within our ecosystem. We understood some time ago that employees, partners and customers continue to look for improvements to their information, learning and collaboration experiences."

we.CONECT:

Thanks a lot for this interview!

Interview Partners: Serina Gummert and Vera Geier

She has already accompanied the initial set-up of an intranet at SAP in 1997. Since then, she has led numerous web and portal projects, including the implementation of a role-based SAP Portal and the integration of collaboration platforms to a company-wide SAP Employee Network. Today, she is responsible for the internal enterprise social business strategy, leading a global team of internal strategic consultants that is providing social business consulting, projects/ programs and services across all SAP organizations.

*The **Social Business Collaboration 2013** is an international social collaboration and enterprise communications conference targeting questions and solutions of an advanced business-related collaboration context on different levels: among employees, B2B and within supply chain.*

Topics of focus include platform integration, community and network-management, company-wide real-time video-streaming, internal and external platform alignment, content procurement, information-sharing and expert-finding, as well as multiple device-management and overall approaches and considerations for maintaining and fostering business value.

Information about the event and about we.CONECT can be found on:

<http://collaboration2013.we-conect.com>

Contact:

Stefanie Nawrocki
Program Manager | Corporate, IT & Manufacturing Division
Phone: +49 (0)30 52 10 70 3 . 47
Fax: +49 (0)30 52 10 70 3 . 30
Email: stefanie.nawrocki@we-conect.com



we.CONECT Global Leaders GmbH
Gertraudenstr. 10-12
10178 Berlin, Germany
www.we-conect.com