

## Major clothes manufacturer

### Background

*"We were concerned that email was taking too much of everyone's time. Some people were using email when, for example, a phone call might have been better."*

*"People say they are much more in control of their inboxes and universally they feel more productive. The time spent on email is reduced, there is less in their inbox and, best of all, the emails are of a higher quality"*

*"We recognised that technology alone could not solve email overload"*

Like many international companies, this clothes manufacturer uses email to communicate on a daily basis with employees and territories across Europe and has to manage carefully the problems associated with a constant barrage of emails. When communicating with colleagues from differing cultures and time zones, The company has to remain sensitive to the language needs of business people whose first language may not be English.

### The Challenge – Dismantling a 21st Century Tower of Babel

The company was aware that email overload was threatening the productivity of its global workforce. Comments the CIO and VP IT (at the time the project was undertaken) *"We were concerned that just reading and answering email was taking too much of everyone's time. Some people were using email when, for example, a quick phone call might have been better."*

*"However, email can be incredibly effective – when you are working with people with lots of different languages. It can be a great leveller because it gives everyone time to make their point clearly compared with the pressure of participating in live meetings or tele-conferences."*

### The Solution - Less is more

Working with Mesmo Consultancy, the manufacturer has taken a people-centric approach, devising and then starting to roll out its 'Release Time' email best practice charter in a workshop programme. *"The overall theme was to help everyone become more time efficient,"* commented the CIO.

### The Outcome

Feedback has been very encouraging; *"Generally people say they are much more in control of their inboxes and universally they say they feel more productive. The time spent on email is reduced, there is less in their inbox and, best of all, the emails are of a higher quality"* says the CIO.

A sample of employees who attended the course, showed that around one in three (29%) had achieved time savings. Almost half (47%) had cut down the number of times they accessed their inboxes daily and are less reliant on email as the sole means of communication - one conversation can obviate the need for lengthy rounds of email. Total email volumes are down, as are the quantity of unwanted emails and cumbersome attachments.

The company recognised that technology alone could not solve email overload because emails are sent by humans whose behaviour plays a crucial part in email management. The solution has been an effective email policy reinforced by education and training.

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