

CASE STUDY: MASTERING THE CRISIS WITH GOTOMEETING



The Region of Mittelfranken creates and supports public facilities for the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of all citizens living in Mittelfranken.

Berufsbildungswerk Mittelfranken (Mittelfranken Vocational Training Centre) is a facility of the Region of Mittelfranken. The focus is on vocational training for people living with disabilities and with special needs in the fields of listening, language and learning. Young people from the region and across Germany receive pre-vocational training and/or initial vocational training providing a qualification.

THE CHALLENGE

In collaboration with the Federal Employment Agency, Berufsbildungswerk Mittelfranken offers tailored training programmes and targets for young people. That means the centre has to ensure the training programme of the Federal Employment Agency is contractually fulfilled for all participants of the Vocational Training Centre for Listening, Language and Learning – **including during the Corona pandemic.** According to Sandra Hauber, deputy administrative manager, quality management officer and in charge of the Reha 4.0 digitalisation project, precisely that was the major challenge.

“It was a really dicey situation when we had to close our centre, together with the vocational schools, and send all the participants home,” says Hauber right off the bat. “We had to implement a hygiene and protection concept and consider how to provide services to our participants and reorganise our entire allocation of work and tasks almost over night,” she adds.

THE SOLUTION

Thanks to GoToMeeting, the Vocational Training Centre for Listening, Language and Learning could manage all work processes via video conferencing. “You’ll laugh, but we use GoToMeeting almost 8 hours a day,” says Hauber with a grin. “Whether for internal meetings, online training for staff or communication with our participants, our everyday life is now unthinkable without GoToMeeting.”

The tool from LogMeIn also played an important role in the implementation of hygiene and protection plans. “Since we also work together with young people living with disabilities and pre-existing conditions at the Vocational Training Centre, it was especially important to us to develop a hygiene and protection concept that is not only effective, but that can also be quickly implemented.”

“GoToMeeting was naturally a great help to us,” says the social education worker. “The rule at our centre was to avoid contact whenever possible, both in terms of contact among staff and contact with our participants,” she adds.

The online meeting tool from LogMeIn became increasingly well established and used more and more frequently by the staff. Within the centre, use of the tool became a matter of course, creating the need for more licences. The IT department of the Region of Mittelfranken, which is responsible for organising and allocating licences for GoToMeeting, had its hands full.

“Our facility has around 220 employees and 310 participants, so we have 530 people that we have to connect somehow,” says IT officer Alesja Gast from the Region of Mittelfranken. “We started with 4 licences associated with a test phase,” she adds. “Within a few days that was no longer sufficient because all the staff switched to the GoToMeeting tool. Now we have 50 licences,” says the member of the administrative staff.

THE RESULT

The introduction of online meeting software from LogMeIn was an absolute plus for the Berufsbildungswerk Mittelfranken. “GoToMeeting is not only an important step towards digitalisation for us, but has also enabled to ensure the continuation of our programmes during the Corona crisis,” says Hauber.

By implementing GoToMeeting, the centre has taken an important step towards the world of Work and Training 4.0 and has laid the foundation for the continued functioning of its operations, provision of the training programmes for participants and internal training. “All our procedures are running relatively normally, in a very orderly manner and highly focused on goals and results – the reason, quite simply is that we have GoToMeeting,” reiterates the social education worker.

In order to be able to continue communicating with the participants, the Vocational Training Centre initially set up a cloud. “In the long run, that was suboptimal, because we also support young people who communicate solely using sign language,” says Hauber. The Bavarian Ministry of Culture quickly provided a solution for the vocational schools affiliated with the Vocational Training Centre : Office 365 and Microsoft Teams.

The Region of Mittelfranken and the Vocational Training Centre could not use solutions like MS Teams because of high requirements in terms of data protection and data security. “It quickly became clear to us that we need an alternative solution,” says Hauber.

The IT department of the Region of Mittelfranken, in the person of Alesja Gast, assessed several online tools and finally decided on GoToMeeting, the online meeting software from LogMeIn, as the collaboration tool for internal video conferences and online training. All the internal decision-makers found the LogMeIn data protection agreement in particular to be convincing across the board.

Not only has the number of licences increased, so too have the fields of application. For example, the online tool from LogMeIn has also been used for staff training. Training opportunities are an important topic, especially for staff working as teachers. Thanks to GoToMeeting, the staff could continue to demonstrate the supplementary qualification in rehabilitation education.

It was also important for the Vocational Training Centre and Hauber to have an online meeting tool that enabled screen sharing. GoToMeeting was ideal for that purpose too. “We could perform 90 percent of the audits for our supervision audit using GoToMeeting. For example, staff could share important documents with one another concerning our operations. For us it was just like any other audit,” says Hauber, praising the tool.

GoToMeeting made it easier to organise training sessions, implement meetings with all participants more quickly and create further training options – despite the pandemic. Hauber was particularly impressed by the implementation of the tool and introduction to it.

“The technical skills of our staff range right the way from ‘very well versed technically’ to ‘don’t bother me with that!’,” says Hauber with a smile. “Nevertheless, in the initial phase we had almost no queries about the use of GoToMeeting,” she adds. “It’s very easy to handle and the interface is highly intuitive.”

“I’d almost go so far as to say that the staff really enjoyed it. We offered all the staff training and set up test areas to alleviate the staff’s fears – that worked very well.”

During the implementation, the Vocational Training Centre was supported by the IT department and information security officer of the Region of Mittelfranken. Gast confirms: **“GoToMeeting really is extremely easy to use; if there were any teething problems from time to time, we could always approach LogMeIn with our questions – you aren’t left to deal with any complications alone.** There’s always a contact person who can provide help quickly and proficiently.”

It comes as no surprise that the Vocational Training Centre and the Region of Mittelfranken will continue to use GoToMeeting, as well as another LogMeIn tool. Since the staff increasingly came up against their limits with GoToMeeting, whether for committee meetings or sessions at the regional level, the decision was made also to use GoToWebinar, the webinar software from LogMeIn, in future.

“Especially for our information events, it’s a big advantage for us to be able to integrate live surveys with results straight away. GoToWebinar covers that need very well,” notes Gast in conclusion.

Not only is GoToMeeting continuing to be used at the Vocational Training Centre and the Region of Mittelfranken, but it has also been joined by GoToWebinar. It means that the Vocational Training Centre and the Region of Mittelfranken are strengthening their position during the crisis and are well equipped for the digital future.

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– Sandra Hauber, deputy administrative manager, quality management officer and in charge of the Reha 4.0 digitalisation project