

THE KEY ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY HAS BECOME A NECESSITY OF THE BUSINESS WORLD THAT IS GRADUALLY BECOMING INTEGRATED INTO TODAY'S CORPORATE AND IT STRATEGIES. THIS LEVEL OF ALIGNMENT IS REMARKABLE AND AFFECTS ALL OF US IN OUR DAILY PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES.

TEXT LUC MAENE - ESAE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL FERTILIZER ASSOCIATION

In trade associations, IT is not only part of the way our organisations are managed from an administrative and project management standpoint. IT should also be conceived as a tool to improve our services or even create new ones. As part of service provision to members, remote technology and web 2.0 offer a diverse array of opportunities by, in particular, allowing greater information tailoring, service customisation and interactivity. The first and most important use of IT investment for a trade association is its website. Brochures, flyers, business cards now need to be complemented by more interactive presentation materials.

At the International Fertilizer Association (IFA), we recently revamped our website entirely and opted for a content management system. With such a team structure in place, any IFA staff member can create and edit web pages. This decision marked an important change in our association's culture. The website is now no longer the webmaster's turf. Providing content is everybody's responsibility. fertilizer.org now has become a one-stop information place to communicate with all stakeholders, from members to journalists and the general public. Our primary audience is our membership. To reach out to them in

a more personalised manner, a member-only section was created that addresses members' information needs. To improve further interactive and remote collaboration, we have also just started using online workspaces for document sharing, such as MS Live Workspace. Our overall communications strategy now tackles the challenge of improving our




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web presence, in particular through web 2.0 tools (YouTube, SlideShare, LinkedIn, etc.) In addition, we are currently trying to improve our internal knowledge management by using project management and team workspaces, such as MS Sharepoint, to communicate better among ourselves, collaborate more effectively, improve workflows and

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LOOKING BACK ESAE/EMIF ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME MARCH 18, 2009 - TOUR & TAXIS, BELGIUM

IN CONJUNCTION WITH 

ESAE was pleased to partner with EMIF in Brussels on 18 March, 2009 for a first-of-its-kind dedicated association programme. We'd like to thank all delegates and speakers who helped make this a valuable, content-rich morning and a basis for partnership building.

'Strategies for challenging times: building your thriving association' was the theme giving speakers and participants the chance to discuss the challenge of members' en-

gagement in today's climate. Gérard Legris, Head of Unit at the European Commission, provided new insights into the workings of the organisation. We also welcomed Karin Wouters who offered first-hand case studies on crisis management.

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facilitate administrative procedures. The next step in our efforts will be to leverage IT in the context of our events. So far, we have been using limited new technology. The format of the IFA meetings has remained quite traditional because IT has not yet delivered innovative solutions that can replace face-to-face networking. We are, however, exploring the possibilities of making greater

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use of tele/web-conferencing for smaller meetings. In fact, the power of new technologies can be utilised for trade associations to communicate better among themselves. In this capacity, ESAE is tasked with an important role: to bring together information from its members and share it widely through its website and other interactive means.

de Cagna, chief strategist and founder of Principled Innovation LLC. You will explore the unprecedented revolution taking place in the broader operating environment, helping you make the case for innovation. You will distill key ideas and insights from an innovation case study, and walk away with key concepts and strategies for designing an open innovation system for your organization.

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