



Customer Profile

The agricultural institute of Grangeneuve (IAG) in the Swiss canton of Fribourg aims to promote and develop the land-related professions, agribusiness and home economics by offering related training and services.

Business Situation

At the IAG's training centers, course planning, classroom occupation and professor timetable arrangements used to be done on paper, a painstaking method that could not prevent clashes in the timetable and other errors and was of no assistance in drawing up statistics.

Solution

Use the Outlook calendar functions to arrange lessons, classrooms, professor deployment and teaching aids. Specific procedures developed to speed up and facilitate timetable implementation.

Benefits

- Efficient course planning for the entire year at the Institute's three training centers
- No more clashing classes, professors or classrooms
- Special constraints taken account of (types of room, professor workloads, etc.)
- All data relating to activities filed in the same place
- Timetable accessible to everyone and able to be published on the internet
- Easy extraction of statistics

Microsoft Outlook rings the school bell

"Now all our timetable information is filed in the same place – in Microsoft Outlook – and can be easily accessed by everyone. We can rest assured there will be no timetable clashes for the different types of resources. As this solution is completely based on standard tools, it costs us practically nothing and doesn't depend on a provider, further training or maintenance. It takes account of special requirements. What's more, the data we file can be used for drawing up statistics and will help us to optimize our timetables in the future."

Alexandre Horner, director of the IAG agriculture and forestry training center

The Fribourg agricultural institute in Grangeneuve set up a solution based on Microsoft Outlook 2003 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 for course planning and timetabling professors and classrooms at its three training centers. This system is designed to prevent clashes and handle special requirements related to types of room and professor workloads. Once the timetables had been worked out, they were made available to everyone who needed them, published in a class book as well as on the web and sent to the professors' PDAs. Changes to the timetable are managed and published in the same way. Furthermore, the filed data enables the institute to draw up statistics on such things as classroom occupation and professor workloads.

Customer Profile

The agricultural institute of Grangeneuve (IAG) in the Swiss canton of Fribourg aims to promote and develop the land-related professions, agribusiness and home economics by offering related training and services. In its three bilingual training centers, it teaches 800 students of both sexes: farmers, forestry workers, lumberjacks, farm produce traders, dairy and food industry engineers, home economics managers or family workers. Among the services provided by this Fribourg agribusiness center is the dairy industry advisory and inspection service of the cantons of Fribourg and Neuchâtel. The IAG also runs a number of practical operations: agriculture, pig farming, dairy farming, market and horticultural gardening, beekeeping and orchard farming. An ISO 9001-certified organization, the IAG has a payroll of 180 (140 in full-time employment) and has a reception center with hotel facilities, rooms and a restaurant for conventions, courses and visitors.

Business Situation

The IAG has three separate centers offering training in two languages for 10 different trades; this involves about forty classes a year. Scheduling the timetables for these courses, with students, a professor, a room and teaching aids for each lesson, is further complicated by the fact that most of the professors have other commitments. Added to this are special requirements with regard to the types of room and maximum professor workloads. In the past, timetables were drawn up in the form of cards posted on boards, a painstaking method that was notoriously unreliable. It was exceedingly difficult to validate, and clashes, such as two classes scheduled for the same room, were only discovered as they actually occurred. Another drawback of this system was the difficulty of drawing up statistics, particularly on room occupancy and professor workloads. To cap it all, each center had its own way of presenting timetables, which prevented uniform publication, notably on the internet.





Partner Profile

Located in Villars-sur-Glâne (canton of Fribourg) for the last 15 years, InfoTeam is an IT company with a payroll of 25 providing services mainly for industry and the public sector (local, cantonal, federal and public transport authorities). In the technical field it develops solutions for process automation, equipment supervision, real-time data capture, production management, production and distribution of water and electricity, technical building management, equipment and works safety. For the public sector it designs content management systems (CMS) and documentary workflow systems and carries out SharePoint and Biztalk integrations. In software engineering, it develops applications for .NET and J2EE environments, including on the web and for pocket PCs.

www.infoteam.ch

Solution

Spurred on by Alexandre Horner, the new director of the agriculture and forestry center, the IAG decided to set up an IT project to manage timetables. The basic idea being to file all the data relating to everyone's activities in the same place, Microsoft Outlook 2003 with Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 turned out to be the ideal tools. To avoid having to work with separate databases and train staff to use different systems, the school rejected the use of specific scheduling software from the outset.

The objectives were defined as follows:

- All the data on classes and timetables filed in the same place
- Reliable timetables (no clashes, special requirements met)
- Professors' training work and other work integrated in a single calendar
- Uniform layout of timetables for the three centers; timetables accessible by everyone and online
- Capacity to draw up statistics, especially on use of classrooms and professor workloads

An account was opened for each class, professor, room and teaching aid; each lesson became a meeting where the class "invited" a professor, a room and the requisite equipment. In the first year, the times were entered as individual meetings for each lesson, but this turned out to be too longwinded and inefficient. So the IAG turned to an IT advisor, Pierre Dumas of Audio Media Assist, for add-ins to Outlook to automate important tasks such as the definition of courses as a series of meetings, finding and replacing a specific resource and shifting series of meetings. A software layer for timetable presentation and layout was also developed. InfoTeam, a Microsoft partner, was later asked to run an audit of the system and build a function to test the consistency of the timetables that had been generated. But no alterations were made to the functioning of Outlook itself.

More Information

If you would like further information on Microsoft products and services, please contact the Microsoft subsidiary in your country:

Microsoft Switzerland Ltd Liab. Co

Richtistrasse 3

CH-8304 Wallisellen

Telephone +41 (0)848 22 44 88

Fax +41 (0)43 456 44 44

www.microsoft.com/switzerland

If you would like further information on this case study, please contact:

InfoTeam

Route du Petit-Moncor 14

Case postale 118

CH-1752 Villars-sur-Glâne

Telephone +41 (0)26 409 74 30

Fax +41 (0)26 409 74 35

www.infoteam.ch

Benefits

In spring 2005, IAG could finally rely on the new system for organizing the timetable for the following year. With or without a computer application, building a new timetable is always a very complicated matter. This is why, after it has been worked out, it is always reviewed and undergoes several cycles of correction before its final validation. Once this is done, the timetable is transferred to the staff's agendas and all professors have to do is to look it up on their PDA to find out when their classes are. Class timetables are also constantly published and updated online and in printed form, including temporary changes such as replacements. In such cases the supply professor is immediately informed via his/her PDA. A hundred and forty people can now access the system, including people working in the forestry/lumberjack section which is located on another site of the school.

The advantages of the system are:

- Reliability: no clashes, and special requirements fulfilled
- Capacity to draw up statistics (workloads) from filed data
- Easy, automatic timetable publishing
- Clear view of school and professor activities
- "Cost-free" solution based on standard tools. No dependence on a provider, no installation and limited training, as users work in a familiar environment.

A number of projects are envisaged for the future. One of them involves timetable optimization and could be undertaken in collaboration with the operational research institute at the University of Fribourg. Another consists of student data management using Outlook's contact functions.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Office Professional 2003
- Microsoft Windows Server System
 - Microsoft Windows Server 2003
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Microsoft Windows Mobile 2003
- Technologies
 - Microsoft Active Directory
 - .NET Framework

© 2005 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All brands cited are trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and other countries. The names and products of other companies may be the registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Published October 2005

Microsoft®