Educe Group relies on Saba Cloud to create a closer, more effective virtual team.

Industry: Professional Services, Human Capital
Use Case: Learning Management, Collaboration, Career Development, Performance Management

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Nyla Reed, Founding Partner, Educe Group

CHALLENGE
Provide geographically dispersed team of professionals with improved access to organizational knowledge and a more efficient and effective means to collaborate to serve clients better.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Enables Educe Group to build a vital, dynamic, 24/7 community that incorporates many aspects of its organization – from business-critical functions to their Active for Life wellness program
- Accelerates employee effectiveness and significantly improves response time to client issues – increasing client satisfaction
- Empowers individuals by improving access to information and expertise using proven enterprise social networking tools
- Eliminates rework by capturing meetings, informal conversations and other exchanges of information for later use
- Streamlines and enhances the new employee onboarding process and encourages individuals to take charge of their own learning to further their careers
- Is supported by the Saba Cloud, eliminating the need for a costly, complex technology infrastructure

Educe Group is a consulting firm that provides professional services primarily in the area of human capital development. Founded in 2003, Educe offers innovative solutions and guidance focusing on organizational learning, performance, talent management and compliance for corporate clients, large and small – as well as government departments and agencies.
When the firm was smaller, new hires traveled to Educe’s main office in Bethesda, Maryland for a week of orientation and training. Instructors conveyed the firm’s consulting methodology in person and assisted with the completion of HR paperwork. The firm also flew everyone to centralized meetings twice a year and had weekly status updates that were handled via web conferencing. There was a sizable document repository for everything from client engagement agreements to business development updates. And of course, information was frequently exchanged via email.

“In our early years, we got a lot of face-to-face time and we could ensure that everyone was on the same page,” said Nyla Reed, founding partner of Educe Group. “But as we grew, we were hiring more people and we had client obligations across the nation as well as internationally, so that model simply wasn’t working any longer.”

Educe wanted to create an environment where people could reach out virtually to a large number of colleagues, rather than the one or two people they knew personally or had worked with in the past – and where everyone would feel a part of the firm’s open, collaborative culture. To accomplish this, Educe chose Saba’s people development and collaboration platform.

**EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS**

Educe’s business success relies on the speed of response – providing information and assistance that clients are looking for as quickly as possible. With Saba, the firm can much more effectively empower its employees.

“Any team has varied expertise – such as technical, functional or business process-oriented knowledge,” Reed remarked. “Because we’re so geographically dispersed, we needed a better way to empower people to quickly find what they require – without having to track down the one ‘expert’ who might well be tied up in a client engagement or not able to respond due to travel or other issues.”

Saba Cloud provides a variety of tools that have enabled Educe to create a more closely connected professional community. These tools include:

- Groups, discussion boards, blogs and activity streams tailored to specific needs or interests to encourage conversations rather than exchanging multiple emails
- Chat, high-definition video meetings integrated right into the solution, and desktop sharing for real-time collaboration that can be captured for later use
- Following subject-matter experts, skills and tagging, and social bookmarks to discover and learn from the best
- Unified searches that include not only document repositories but also blogs, groups, individual experts and more
- Saba Cloud pQ scores that measure and reward an individual’s engagement and influence
We like that everyone in Saba Cloud has his or her own profile. People can follow particular individuals, tag them based on specific skills, and even tag themselves to reflect their unique areas of expertise. We also like that novices can start out just as consumers of Saba Cloud contributions and join in the conversations whenever they feel ready. And we really like the fact that these exchanges can be captured and reused.

Nyla Reed, Founding Partner, Educe Group

ENSURING BROAD ACCEPTANCE

Although Educe has significant expertise in implementing solutions designed to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness, when it was ready to roll out Saba Cloud for itself, the firm took the time to properly prepare for a successful implementation. Key steps included:

- Assessing organizational readiness: Evaluate whether people will be receptive to the new processes and the user-friendliness of the technology
- Seeding the data: Ensure there’s an ample library of documents, experts and other resources loaded into the system so people can immediately find something of value
- Designing an effective search strategy: Ensure that the solution fits user preferences and provides searchable access to experts as well as physical assets
- Identifying subject-matter experts: Understand that nearly everyone is an expert in something and let users help determine who the experts are through tagging and other means
- Starting with a soft launch: Limit the number of features at the beginning and focus on those that will have the most impact

Educe has made Saba a key part of its onboarding process, empowering people to direct their own learning and development. All of the firm’s new employees use the solution – both to get questions answered and to collaborate with other employees in their new-hire group on their initial assignments.

MEETING COMPETITIVE CHALLENGES

Saba has enabled Educe to compete successfully in a challenging environment by creating a much more closely connected professional community and overcoming the obstacles created by time and distance.

“I’ve found that the Saba Cloud app has been especially useful when I’m working on-site with clients and on the road,” Brandon Williams, Educe business consultant, noted. “It’s helpful to receive email notifications instantly when there are new customer questions or team resources, or I can quickly log in on my iPhone to pull up relevant documents while travelling.”
As a new employee, EduceConnect provided me with a vast and expanding source of HR information, as well as a place for my New Hire Curriculum. Now that I’ve begun working on implementations, I find myself going to EduceConnect constantly to collect best practices, documents and additional information from colleagues. Collaboration through Saba has greatly improved my growth as a business consultant.

— Pat Horan
Business Consultant
Educe Group

“Almost immediately, we noticed that Saba gave us a faster response time on client issues,” Reed added. “We finally had a place where we could throw a question out to our entire community and people responded instantly.”

Perhaps most importantly, Saba also plays a crucial role in an area that Reed sees as fundamental for business success. “Understanding relevancy is a required skill today,” asserted Reed. “We rely on Saba’s company-wide networking and tagging strategy to help our people filter information and find what they really need for the task at hand.”

— Reed
Educe Group