

## ◆◆◆◆◆: Giving collaboration a makeover with an innovative, customer-first solution on Google Workspace

◆◆◆◆◆ automated key processes such as employee onboarding and offboarding to reduce administrative effort, enabling its IT staff to shift from working on admin to mainly developing value-add projects. ◆◆◆◆◆ puts its staff and customers first, by moving to a cloud-based working environment to streamline work processes and automate key admin tasks, enabling staff to focus on adding value for customers.

### Google Workspace Results

- Enables live collaboration across devices and operating systems with interconnected meeting, file storage, and document editing solutions
- Supported an immediate transition to 100% remote working office during COVID-19 lockdown
- Saved time by automating office processes such as onboarding and offboarding
- Reduced workload, administrative burden, and training demands on infrastructure team

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**Empowers +350 staff to work remotely and productively**

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The prestige beauty market in Germany is the third largest in Europe, with [customers who remain loyal](#) to their local, independent stores. The big question is: If you're selling products online, instead of in physical stores, how do you get the attention of these customers and keep it?

Online beauty retailer ◆◆◆◆◆'s vision is to be a one-stop-shop for beauty lovers looking for perfumes, personal hygiene, professional hair products, performance skin care, and more. Whether a shopper is looking for well-known international brands, trendy Korean beauty products, local "clean beauty" classics, or a large drugstore and men's assortment, ◆◆◆◆◆ offers it all. With over 900 brands and more than 55,000 products in its catalog, ◆◆◆◆◆ offers more product variety than any other online beauty retailer, keeping even the most selective shoppers interested.

Behind its large and diverse range of products, an equally expansive network of teams and staff works together to deliver the ◆◆◆◆◆ vision. Marketing, technology, logistics, customer service, and business strategy teams must be aligned with each other in order for ◆◆◆◆◆'s customers to browse, order, and receive their products without a hitch. Earlier in the company's story, each team operated with a high level of independence, often with its own preferred tools and applications. Employees were using a mixture of devices and operating systems, and for a while, it worked.

However, as ◆◆◆◆◆ enjoyed more success, matured, and grew, it realized that its heterogeneous IT environment was causing miscommunications, duplication of work, and leading to a large administrative burden. When Mac users and Windows users required different software to work on the same document, how could they collaborate smoothly? When inviting someone outside the organization to a meeting required a participant to put them on speakerphone, how could meetings be efficient?

"It's natural to initially prioritize growth, marketing, and customer service over a cohesive digital environment," explains ◆◆◆◆◆, Director Technology at ◆◆◆◆◆. "But as we grew, we realized that to stay ahead of the curve, we needed to work together more seamlessly."

The company decided it would be best for its employees to have a single, integrated solution they could rely on for key office processes: meetings, file storage, and document creation.

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With this goal in mind, it decided on a bold transition to a cloud-based working environment. When it came to deciding which solution to go for, ♦♦♦♦♦ leaned on its strong core values. As the company strives to operate with an innovative, customer-first mentality, it looked for a solution that embodied these qualities. And as it realized the move would be a culture change, ♦♦♦♦♦ had its eye on simplicity and a single interface to make the transition a smooth one. It was a search that led ♦♦♦♦♦ to Google Workspace, and implementation partner , whose approachable, collaborative style made it stand out from other available choices.

## Meetings made simple

When multiple stakeholders across departments need to sign off on a document or decision, a meeting can solve an issue in 10 minutes or waste everyone's time. Inefficient meetings were a major challenge for ♦♦♦♦♦. Offline, room booking was error prone and not intuitive, with meeting rooms often double-booked. Online, different teams used different tools to hold meetings, and if one participant wasn't in the office, the meeting could "break," meaning that the tool would stop working or new participants wouldn't be able to join.

Today, by using Google Meet and Calendar together, ♦♦♦♦♦ has solved these key challenges. Online, it doesn't matter where someone is, whether they're part of the company, or what device they're using, as any invitee can join via a meeting link or by dialing in directly from their phone. Offline, rooms can be booked directly through Calendar, with clear availability slots, and the addition of Google Meet hardware to the in-house meeting rooms keeps everyone connected.

## One place to store information, one place to find it

With different departments using different online storage tools, as well as a mixture of online and on-premises local storage, it was a challenge for employees to find specific documents and files. New starters struggled to know where their work should be stored, as they often needed to move files from one tool to another. It was also difficult to know which version of a file was the latest and to ensure that the most up-to-date version of a document was the one being shared. Remote workers needed to access their files via VPN, slowing down their connection due to the extra encryption and security required. On top of that, increasing the

number of employees accessing files remotely led to larger loads on ♦♦♦♦♦’s servers, raising the burden on IT infrastructure.

Now, with Drive, everything is stored in the cloud, accessible from any device, and lives in a single location. Team drives and shared drives allow employees on the same team to access the files they need instantly. Access, editing, and sharing permissions can be restricted to specific individuals, certain teams, or to ♦♦♦♦♦ employees. This helps to keep sensitive documents such as important strategy papers or sales reports available only to those who need to see them.

## Collaboration in real time, regardless of device

Before Google Workspace, the same spreadsheet, text document or slideshow could have its formatting changed or corrupted by being saved and reopened in multiple formats, or viewed on multiple devices, leading to a buggy and unreliable editing process.

These problems are no longer an issue for ♦♦♦♦♦. Accessed through a browser, the same Slides, Sheets, or Docs will look exactly the same to any viewer, regardless of each person’s device or operating system, whether they are logging in in the office or from home.

In the same way that using Meet helped to simplify meetings for employees, simplifying file creation, editing, and management has had an immediate effect on collaboration within and between teams. ♦♦♦♦♦ notes that one major advantage is that large numbers of team members can now work together in real time. Stakeholders in a meeting can view, edit, and sign off on a document much faster.

## Automating processes via easy-to-use and open interfaces

One of ♦♦♦♦♦’s goals was to reduce administrative effort needed in its processes, such as the time taken to onboard new people or offboard staff members who were moving on. By adopting the Google Workspace Developer platform, ♦♦♦♦♦ empowers its developers to customize, integrate, and extend Google Workspace capabilities. Each tool has

well documented, accessible APIs, which means that in-house developers are able to easily use them to import and export data from each tool and connect tools together.

A new employee's details entered into a Form, for example, can be exported into a staff information spreadsheet, then synced automatically with HR records. With Google Workspace, ◆◆◆◆◆ is able to automate processes more quickly and with its existing team of developers. The company is currently working on the finishing touches of the automation of its onboarding, offboarding, and requests across the company." There is an API for almost everything," says ◆◆◆◆◆. "If we want to automate one step in a process, or synchronize information into a document, it's much easier now to build automation around Google Workspace."

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## Reducing administrative and infrastructure burden

Coordinating multiple tools and environments led to a high administrative burden in the background for the infrastructure team. ◆◆◆◆◆ especially wanted to invest in tools which helped to reduce workload and create simple but scalable solutions. Google Workspace requires less administration than the previous environment, freeing up time and resources for staff to add real value by automating internal processes and putting technology to work to better enable other teams within the company. With Cloudwüdig's support, ◆◆◆◆◆ trained up "Google Guides," or key early adopters among employees, who are then able to help to train others within the company. As ◆◆◆◆◆ explains: "We don't need to hire multiple specialists to configure our environment; Google Workspace is so easy to use that we were able to just as easily train our existing team in a matter of hours."



## A partnership for innovation and positive change

With Cloudwüdig's guidance, ♦♦♦♦♦ made its technical transition in just two and a half months. Close to 350 employees immediately began using Gmail, Drive, Meet, and Calendar. However, convincing staff to leave behind their old document creation tools and move to Google Workspace apps instead is more of a challenge; employees were so used to their existing tools that they had been looking past their flaws to create, edit, and share documents in a way they felt was fast and hassle-free. While ♦♦♦♦♦ and his team could see a much more efficient future creating on Google Workspace, there was a level of inertia within the company.

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**- [REDACTED], Director Technology, [REDACTED]**

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Importantly, ♦♦♦♦♦ wanted employees to naturally and positively choose to switch, instead of "forcing" them over. Here, Cloudwüdig stepped in once more, this time to help ♦♦♦♦♦ by using tried and tested change management strategies. A key adoption driver was building a team of Google Guides. These are regular enthusiastic users from across a company who receive early access and training for Google Workspace, ideally three to six weeks before everyone else. ♦♦♦♦♦'s Google Guides became the first line of support for other employees as the Google Workspace rollout continued, helping to reduce the load on helpdesk and IT staff during the transition.

## Working from wherever without friction

No one could have foreseen the effects of 2020's global pandemic on the workplace. Although planning for a lockdown had not been on the agenda, the move to Google Workspace couldn't have been more timely for ♦♦♦♦♦. Its technical transition was completed some months before Germany's government recommended teleworking wherever possible, and by that time its employees were very comfortable working via Google Workspace. Now it was able to put cloud-based working to the test.

With solutions such as Meet and Drive in place, ♦♦♦♦♦ immediately transitioned its office staff to 100% remote working. Employees have been able to maintain the same workflows and routines as in the office, confident that they can rely on Google Workspace to get things done as usual. Meanwhile, customers are enjoying uninterrupted service, the same reliable site performance they expect, and more products available as the company expands its lineup. "We transitioned to Google Workspace at just the right time," believes ♦♦♦♦♦. "We've seamlessly moved to a fully remote way of working, changing very little, and we're able to keep providing the best service to our customers."

## Reaching the next level of growth and innovation through cultural change

So what's next for ♦♦♦♦♦? Its first priority is to keep helping its employees get the most out of Google Workspace to make their individual roles easier and their work more innovative. In a busy company, training is often neglected as higher priority issues come up. Today, staff are using the new tools, but not all of them are aware of which workflows help them to carry out their tasks in the fastest and most effective way. The company's next goal is to enable more automation when it comes to administrative tasks: whatever can be automated, should be automated, freeing up staff time for more value-add activities. Finally, ♦♦♦♦♦ is looking to identify new or overlooked challenge areas across the company where an innovative solution could save time and energy.

♦♦♦♦♦ is also working with Google Workspace to find new ways to respond to the unique challenges of the retail space, where sales like Black Friday can cause much higher demand spikes than usual. Together, they're testing a pilot scheme using Chromeboxes and Chrome OS to enable fast scaling up of warehouse workstations in response to such a peak. While ♦♦♦♦♦'s technical transition took just three months, its commitment to continued improvement shows no sign of stopping.