# Berlitz taps intelligence of global workforce for best product quality

*Portal, social networking and real-time communication help pool knowledge and skills*

## Overview

### The need

To accelerate its globalization and fully leverage its intellectual capital, Berlitz Corporation needed a better way for its employees around the world to communicate and learn from each other

### The solution

Berlitz built a global platform with IBM® WebSphere® Portal, IBM Lotus® Connections and IBM Lotus Sametime® software to share skills, knowledge and information amongst its 12,000 human resources

### The benefit

The portal to an enterprise-wide intranet with social networking and collaboration transformed a regionalized operation into an agile, global company able to deploy higher quality educational offerings

Founded by Maximilian Berlitz in 1878 in Providence, Rhode Island, Berlitz Corporation is today well known around the world as the industry-leading provider of language services. Currently owned by a Japanese publisher of educational materials, Berlitz is an education and leadership development company that provides communications skills and global leadership training based on its premier language training services.

## Solution needed for better utilization of knowledge and skills

With more than 550 centers in over 75 countries, Berlitz Corporation has a staff of approximately 12,000 instructors and employees providing language services to corporate and government clients, students and other individuals. For some time, the company had been using separate internal websites for each of its geographic regions—Asia, Europe and the Americas. As a result, employees in each region were not able to communicate and share knowledge easily with employees located in other parts of the world.

To help accelerate its globalization and improve employee communication, Berlitz needed a system that would enable its employees to share common information, strategic directions and goals, and that would drive collaboration among them worldwide. The company also wanted the means to identify and connect individual employees based on their experience, skills and expertise.

## Intellectual capital and employee smarts come together in SPACE

Working with IBM Software Services for Lotus, Berlitz created a global platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing based on IBM WebSphere Portal, IBM Lotus Connections social networking, and

*"With SPACE, we can collaborate more quickly, more efficiently, at a deeper level to foster innovation and see our work in a new light."*

—Yukako Uchinaga, CEO, Berlitz Corporation

IBM Lotus Sametime instant messaging software. This enterprise-wide intranet, called SPACE (for Smart Place to Accelerate Community of Excellence), provides a secure environment for pooling and leveraging expertise and intellectual capital internationally.

The WebSphere Portal interface enables centralized sharing of executive messages and directives, information and departmental news. Pages are tailored to specific user attributes and access levels, and content can also be structured by region and category. Lotus Sametime lets users communicate with others in real time, wherever they are located, and Lotus Connections helps employees find and interact with others based on needs, shared interests and objectives.

Several Lotus Connections components in SPACE are widely used. Profiles support fast identification of employees with specific expertise, background and skills for answers to questions, consultation and project staffing. Wikis and Files give access to information in documents and presentations—such as training course materials. Blogs enable posting of breaking news, executive messages and real-time feedback from the local centers around the world. Communities let employees form virtual groups based on interests, expertise and business needs. Tag technology for easy filtering is used for all functions, giving users quick paths to needed people and information, independent of time and place.

## Knowledge sharing and products based on social analytics are good business

SPACE has enabled fluid communication and collaboration across the entire Berlitz Corporation workforce, increasing productivity. By breaking the boundaries of the learning centers, it also facilitates interconnection among all Berlitz professionals. Prior to SPACE, communication was mainly point-to-point. SPACE now allows sourcing wisdom from amongst the whole cadre of professionals, wherever they may be.

Pooling the knowledge and expertise of the entire workforce has been a significant step forward for meeting business goals. As Yukako Uchinaga, CEO of Berlitz Corporation attests, "With SPACE, we can collaborate more quickly, more efficiently at a deeper level to foster innovation

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Solution components:

**Software**

- IBM Lotus® Connections
- IBM Lotus Sametime®
- IBM WebSphere® Portal

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and see our work in a new light. Harnessing the collective wisdom of our workforce will be the key to success in business and employee satisfaction."

Among the goals of Berlitz Corporation are to improve the quality of its products, to target new opportunities and tailor products to address them, and to get new products to market more quickly. The SPACE solution helps them do these things in several ways.

### More human input speeds development of higher quality education products

Whereas the development of educational offerings in the past had to rely largely on trial and error, the new capabilities of tagging, rating and commenting infuse greater input of human intelligence and judgment into the process, helping Berlitz shrink the product development cycle. At the same time, ready access to appropriate expertise and talents supports high-quality content, and use of communities allows faster feedback from a wider audience.

### Social analytics help match and tailor products to the right audiences

The tools in SPACE also help to identify products that have worked well in certain regions and may be relevant in other parts of the world. The effectiveness and applicability of these products and their components is made apparent through tagging, ratings and usage patterns that show what is downloaded most, and by recommendations based on understanding of the right audiences for various training products in terms of role, geography, learning needs, and other characteristics that match usage patterns.

### Transformation to agile, global company speeds products to market

Since deploying SPACE, Berlitz has been able to easily identify educational content and approaches that have worked in one geographic region, and then to apply these more broadly around the globe. This has transformed the company from a regionalized operation to an agile, global one. As a result, Berlitz is able to deploy higher-quality, proven educational offerings to both its external markets and its employee population more quickly, and this is increasing customer satisfaction across regions.

## For more information

To learn more about IBM Lotus, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit: **ibm.com**/lotus

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