Case Study: Custom residential cabinetry design and construction

OfficeCalendar Case Study: The Wood Connection

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-- Dennis Everett, Owner
    The Wood Connection

By Lookout Software

OfficeCalendar

Industry
- Custom residential cabinetry design and construction

Environment
- Microsoft Outlook

Challenges
- The staff needed to migrate from a paper-based system to an electronic calendaring system as the business grew.
- They also needed visibility and flexibility for scheduling appointments, not only for themselves but for visiting customers as well.

Solution
- OfficeCalendar for Microsoft Outlook

Benefits
- Steady levels of communication between the staff, so double-bookings are now avoided.
- Client meeting times are easily arranged with a quick glance at other staff members' calendars.
- The group calendar allows everyone to see who is busy and when, and "block off" times when they can't have appointments.

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The Wood Connection

Scenario
Dennis Everett runs a custom cabinetry facility, The Wood Connection, in San Jose, California. Microsoft Outlook was not used by anyone because, according to Dennis, "there was no facility for group scheduling." However the staff badly needed a way to move away from their current paper-based processes.

Challenge
Most of the scheduling at The Wood Connection was done using an old-fashioned paper method. "As our business grew, we needed to get away from our paper-based appointment and calendar system. We needed more visibility and flexibility primarily for scheduling appointments, both for our staff and for customers visiting our facility. We wanted to stay within the Outlook framework, but didn't need or want the complexity and expense of Exchange server product," said Dennis.

Solution
Dennis found OfficeCalendar through a web search using Google. Then he easily installed OfficeCalendar himself. "I found the process to be quick and painless," said Dennis. Finding OfficeCalendar prompted Dennis to install Microsoft Outlook first, which has made the processes at The Wood Connection even simpler.

How It Works
Due to the nature of the way business runs at The Wood Connection, most of the employees find OfficeCalendar's abilities to share calendars and create group calendars to be most useful. According to Dennis, "The majority of the sharing is related to calendars – most of our scheduling is done via the Group Calendar. Individual calendars are also maintained where group visibility is not necessary." The staff's ability to schedule everything on the group calendar solves the problem of double-booking, and more importantly, Dennis can see at a glance how his week is organized because most of the appointments relate to Dennis.

Value
"First and foremost, we have a consistency of communication amongst the office staff," said Dennis. "It also allows us to 'reserve' blocks of time if we don't want to have any appointments scheduled. It becomes very easy for the office staff to find someone's availability when arranging a meeting with a client." OfficeCalendar's ease of use within Microsoft Outlook is also helpful to the staff. According to Dennis, "OfficeCalendar integrates so well into Outlook, it is pretty seamless. If you can use Outlook calendars, you can use OfficeCalendar. I don't think of OfficeCalendar as a separate piece of software since it is so transparent. It really behaves as if it is a native piece of Outlook."

About OfficeCalendar
OfficeCalendar is an easy-to-use, low-cost alternative to Microsoft Exchange Server. OfficeCalendar enables the sharing of Microsoft Outlook calendar, contact and task information on practically any Windows-based network, even without a dedicated server.