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Smartsheet Helps Syngenta Transform the Future of Farming

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Chuck Mihaliak, IT Portfolio Manager, Syngenta North America



Customer: Syngenta

Industry: Agriculture

Organization Size: Enterprise (10,000+ employees)

Region: North America

Website: syngenta.com

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Syngenta manages agricultural research and product development in more than 90 countries, helping farmers increase their crop production to rapidly increasing global population even as less land is available for growing food.

Background

As global leaders in procurement and external The world's population is growing exponentially, which means farmers must find ways to increase their crop production even as less land is available for growing food. Syngenta's goal is to accelerate innovation so it can help farmers boost their yields through better seeds, agricultural products and services, while improving biodiversity and sustainability. The company manages agricultural research and product development in more than 90 countries — and Smartsheet is helping Syngenta connect it all in order to achieve its mission of "Bringing Plant Potential to Life."

Solution

"Every single day, 200,000 more people are inhabiting our planet," says Chris Tutino, senior communications manager at Syngenta. "By 2050, we're going to be sharing our world with more than 9 billion people, which means we're adding 2-billion-plus people over the next 30 years. We need to produce more food in the next 50 years than has been produced in the last 10,000."

Smartsheet was first brought into Syngenta as part of a digital agriculture manager's toolkit, has become a crucial tool in the company's transition to "digital agriculture," and is now used by hundreds of licensed users and thousands of collaborators. Syngenta uses Smartsheet to connect research labs, testing farms, product manufacturing and distribution facilities, and corporate headquarters to ensure fast and accurate decision-making.

Research Decisions in Real Time

The company's Good Growth Plan – the agriculture industry's most ambitious sustainability initiative encompassing six measurable commitments by 2020 – takes into account the need for environmental sustainability, biodiversity, safety, and support for small farms, among others. Using the most advanced technology at its fingertips, like the one of the world's most advanced plant growing facilities and newer technologies like genome editing (i.e., CRISPR), Syngenta is dedicated to collaborating, sharing data, and co-creating with farmers wherever they may be located.

Farming is a complex system with many moving parts. Sending plant growth data from global labs to analysts

Customer:

Smartsheet has also transformed Syngenta's safety assessment and reporting. The company conducts hundreds of safety observations each month; before Smartsheet, paper checklists would be routed to the appropriate safety teams, which could delay fixing issues that had the potential to cause injuries or environmental damage. Smartsheet has eliminated those delays.

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Before, it was taking days, if not weeks, to assemble information. These plants are growing, things are happening; you didn't have the chance to make real-time decisions. We went from taking days and weeks until you see the data to instant access to information all around the world, and this was a transformation.

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used to be slow and cumbersome. Then senior research scientist Katie Hunter realized that Smartsheet enables users to upload photos and research data together, directly from a mobile device, so analysts don't need to search file repositories to connect specific data with pictures of the plants. Hunter downloaded the Smartsheet mobile app onto tablets for several South American research teams, which soon began returning real-time results to analysts in the U.K. and North Carolina.

Faster Reporting and Resolution of Safety Issues

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"The way we're using Smartsheet is transformational," says Ana Davis, head of Health, Safety & Environment for Syngenta North America – Crop Protection. "We assign a QR code for each of our sites. If you're out in the field and you see an unsafe condition, you use your phone to take a picture. We've created alerts in Smartsheet; if the condition is serious enough, we can alert someone immediately so it can be corrected right away."

The new Smartsheet system has dramatically increased the number of safety observations completed at sites throughout the U.S., and Syngenta is now piloting the program in Brazil and India. Davis notes that not only is safety improved when the most urgent conditions are dealt with right away, but Syngenta employees get immediate feedback and know they've made a difference.

Holistic Reporting Through Visual Dashboards

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In a Nutshell:

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uses dashboards to aggregate and analyze information from multiple locations, showing at a glance whether there are performance peaks or clusters of problems in a particular worksite or region. This gives leaders a holistic view of the company's performance and clear insight into where to direct more resources or training.

"There is a transparency that we've never seen before," says Chuck Mihaliak, IT portfolio manager, Syngenta North America. "People are able to share and see information in ways they never envisioned or imagined they could before. People are working in real time on three continents; they could never have done that before."

The data captured by leaders and field teams doesn't just lead to individual dashboards to aggregate and analyze showing at a glance whether there are performance peaks or clusters of problems in a particular worksite or region. This gives leaders a holistic view of the company's performance and clear insight into where to direct more resources or training.

Easier and Less Expensive Registration for Employee Training

Mihaliak is impressed with the ease of implementation and use that Smartsheet offers not just for the company as a whole, but for his own work. He uses Smartsheet to manage employee enrollment in training programs. In just a few hours, he can set up an enrollment site with a registration form, automated alerts for manager approval, notifications, and a roster that updates in real time. Without Smartsheet, he would have relied on a third-party vendor enrollment program, at a cost of additional weeks and hefty licensing fees. Making registration simpler allows teams to be more proactive in creating education and enrichment programs, which opens up more possibilities for improvement and innovation.

As more teams embrace Smartsheet, more possibilities emerge for improving processes, products, and the practice of digital agriculture.

"Once you use Smartsheet and you understand what it can do, it's amazing what the brain does," Davis says. "All of a sudden you're coming up with ideas that you never had before because you were paralyzed by the fact that you didn't have a system. It's not just that you're developing these systems that are very transformational and drive productivity, but that you as an individual now open yourself up to think totally differently. We're dreaming bigger than we ever have."

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