

Success Story | Klenk & Hoursch AG

Online Crisis Management Using Brainloop for Secure and Efficient Crisis Communication



SECURE COLLABORATION FOR CRISIS TEAMS

To ensure it is prepared for any scenario, Klenk & Hoursch – an agency for methodical corporate communication – relies on predictive issue management and develops preventive strategies and instructions for crisis management. It also provides training to the company's crisis teams. A secure online crisis management platform is important to the company in order to help it react quickly. This is why Klenk & Hoursch has been recommending the intuitive Brainloop solution to its customers since 2011 – to help them manage their crisis communications. The online crisis management platform ensures that all documents – which are usually strictly confidential in nature – are available in their newest version and protected from unauthorized access, both within and outside the company.

Brainloop's web-based solution allows crisis team members to interact seamlessly and gives them a high-security storage system that they can access independently of the company's IT infrastructure – any time and from any location. It includes support for collaboration as well as a choice of role and permission categories.

As a result, the team always ensures consistent communications based on the latest approved documents. This is a decisive advantage in an acute crisis, because the teams are under significant pressure and need to react quickly, consistently and in an appropriate manner. The online crisis management platform helps managers always stay on top of any situation.

THE HARDCOPY CRISIS MANUAL IS A THING OF THE PAST

Tobias Müller has just won a new client account – a food manufacturing company. As the manager of the Crisis & Issues consulting division at Klenk & Hoursch AG, he is keen to read through his new customer's crisis manual. The

company is currently under fire because consumers have complained about one of its products. The company may need to organize an extensive recall of the product and has temporarily stopped manufacturing it.



„Online platforms are the medium of choice today for comprehensive crisis prevention and effective crisis PR.“

Tobias Müller, Director of the Crisis & Issues consulting division

Over the years, the company has filed all details of contact people and the processes and procedures to be followed in crises in a ring binder that now contains 150 pages. Some of this information is now obsolete.

Müller spends a lot of time hunting through the pages for information about the relevant departments and people involved in crises, the scope of their responsibilities and

instructions about the processes to be followed. Handwritten notes in the documents show that people have asked for changes to be made to the text, but these have not been included in the printed copy. As a result, users have doubts as to the validity of the content. The binder is stored in a cupboard to which several people have access. That means that confidential information – including personal details – in the manual are not adequately protected.

EFFICIENT ONLINE CRISIS MANAGEMENT WITH BRAINLOOP

“We recommend to our customers that they develop preventive strategies for avoiding and managing crises and use an online crisis management platform to store them,” explains Müller. With today’s technologies, there is no need to store paper documents – which are difficult to navigate – or send sensitive content as unencrypted email attachments. This is why Klenk & Hoursch has been using secure, web-based collaboration for many years. The company ranks in the top ten crisis PR agencies, according to the PR agency ranking published by Pfeffer in April 2013. It had already developed its own online crisis platform as early as 2004. However, the dramatic increase in IT security and compliance requirements prompted Klenk & Hoursch to evaluate solutions from providers of secure online collaboration at the end of 2010. The company selected Brainloop in 2011. Brainloop’s web-based platform for secure collaboration on confidential documents impressed the agency with its extensive set of security features combined with a user-friendly structure and customizable permissions. Klenk & Hoursch recommends the scalable solution to its customers for their crisis PR activities. All materials concerning crisis prevention and management are stored, edited and approved on Brainloop’s software-as-a-service platform. The documents include press release templates, Q&A templates, sample letters to business partners and staff, reporting procedures, lists of all relevant contact people, and how-to documents. They also include detailed communication documents for the most serious threats

that are only available to a limited number of users. The information is encrypted on the platform and can only be viewed and changed by authorized users with the relevant permissions. They authenticate themselves with a password and one-time code sent to their cell phone. When users send documents to other people, the recipient only receives a mail with a link to the platform rather than the document itself. Depending on the confidentiality level of the information, the email’s recipients need to authenticate themselves to access the information. The Brainloop solution is hosted in ISO-certified datacenters in Germany and other countries. It includes operator and administrator shielding, which ensures that Brainloop staff and datacenter technicians are not able to access any of the content.

“Online platforms are the medium of choice today for comprehensive crisis prevention and effective crisis PR,” says Tobias Müller. “They enable members of a crisis team to interact seamlessly while providing them with a shared, high-security storage system that can be accessed anywhere and at any time and is independent of a company’s IT infrastructure. Brainloop is a proven solution and provides all the necessary functionality while remaining easy to use. This makes people’s work easier at a time when they’re under enormous pressure and when information security is critical.” The Brainloop platform is currently being used by several Klenk & Hoursch clients.

FLEXIBILITY WHEN THINGS GET CRITICAL

The crisis consultants at Klenk & Hoursch know only too well how pressurized things can become in crises, which include mass layoffs, product recalls, accidents, compliance violations and data protection breaches. The highest priority is to quickly pinpoint the guidelines and materials detailing the procedures to be followed, taking a rapid yet structured approach to solving the problem. The priority is

to contact the right people, put the agreed plan into action and limit damage to the company. The centralized storage and approval of all information on Brainloop helps the team complete these tasks and react quickly. If things get critical, the company can add extra Brainloop licenses for more users and be invoiced for exactly what they use.

This ensures that all the specialists from different departments, along with external advisors, can access the platform and all the documents relevant to them. The Brainloop solution is integrated into the Office interface, providing even better support for staff. They do not need to log in separately and can save Word or Excel documents directly in the secure environment.

The solution helps make the work more manageable. Müller also emphasizes that it is helpful to be able to keep a clear head in a crisis in order to concentrate on important strategic decisions and their implementation. This is where an online platform can make a significant contribution to efficiency.

PERMISSION GROUPS ELIMINATE MISUSE

When implementing an online crisis management platform, it is important to define permission groups and assign users to them. This ensures that all users can access all the documents they need for their work – and no others. Permissions are assigned individually and define the activities that each user is allowed to undertake on a document. For example, it specifies whether a document is read-only can also be edited, printed or forwarded. It also

defines who is allowed to approve a document and block further changes to it. To help customers, Klenk & Hoursch creates tailored permission concepts for each company and stores them on the Brainloop platform. This ensures end-to-end protection for confidential information and eliminates any risk of misuse. In addition, every access to the platform and every activity undertaken on it is logged, providing automatic compliance with audit-related requirements.

ABOUT KLENK & HOURSCH AG

Klenk & Hoursch AG is headquartered in Frankfurt am Main and specializes in methodical corporate communications. It also provides crisis prevention and management services to enterprises from the German blue-chip index DAX-30 and the

Fortune 500 as well as mid-sized firms. Its team of 32 staff is managed by highly experienced consultants. The agency has won several awards for its projects, including the European Change Communications Award 2013 for strategy.