

# CUSTOMER SOLUTION CASE STUDY



## Summary



### Customer:

AngloGold Ashanti Limited

### Country or Region:

South Africa – JHB

### Industry:

Mining

### Company Profile:

AngloGold Ashanti Limited is a global gold producer with 21 operations on four continents, a substantial project pipeline and an extensive, worldwide exploration program. The company is listed on the New York, Johannesburg, Ghanaian, London and Australian stock exchanges, as well as the Paris and Brussels bourses.

### Business Situation:

AngloGold Ashanti required a powerful internal communications platform that would facilitate extending the company's knowledgebase to its employees worldwide, while facilitating collaboration and the sharing of best practices and other information. AngloGold Ashanti identified the need to collaborate via a centralised solution, shared across geographies and disciplines, to facilitate knowledge capturing and sharing. Find and share skills, expertise and solutions. Connect across disciplines, borders and languages.

### Technologies used:

Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007

## Taking Knowledge to the Next Level

### Client Background

AngloGold Ashanti Limited is a global gold producer with 21 operations on four continents, a substantial project pipeline and an extensive, worldwide exploration program. The company is listed on the New York, Johannesburg, Ghanaian, London and Australian stock exchanges, as well as the Paris and Brussels bourses. AngloGold Ashanti is one of the world's largest gold mining companies with operations in many countries worldwide and head offices in Johannesburg, South Africa. As a result of its global presence AngloGold Ashanti's skills base is spread out internationally making it challenging for individuals or localised groups within the organisation to fully benefit from the company's entire knowledgebase. AngloGold Ashanti therefore needed to gain the ability to bring together skills and knowledge from its various operations around the world to work collaboratively with the ability to share and record information.

### Maximising on Intellectual Property

Manager: Knowledge Systems for AngloGold Ashanti, Karl Schoemaker says that the company had no technology solution in place for this nature of information sharing before. He explains that the organisation holds a lot of intellectual property internationally with over 60 000 employees worldwide but that it largely relied on email, and the 'conventional' Intranet for sharing of information and collaborating on projects. AngloGold Ashanti therefore needed a more effective way for employees to engage with each other in sharing knowledge and experience.

According to Karl employees would often have a question but not be sure who the right person was to ask – or the answer might lie with someone who wouldn't ordinarily be expected to be able to answer it. Job titles alone are not enough to suggest what knowledge any individual in the company might have.

He says that the company needed a platform for information sharing that would enable individuals to pose a question and then make that question available to the entire organisation. Other employees who had agreed to provide input via the system could then provide possible answers and collaborate on finding answers. In this way it would be possible for experience and knowledge to be shared by anyone within the company, irrespective of where they were based geographically.

Karl says that it would also be useful for AngloGold Ashanti if employees were able to establish working groups around particular projects or other areas. This would allow for knowledge transfer to be organised and effectively take place with answers and information being stored in the system, and thereby building a knowledgebase that others could draw from later, saving time, money, and effort.

It was decided that AngloGold Ashanti would need a dedicated and custom-developed solution to provide a centralised platform for collaborative knowledge sharing.

Britehouse subsidiary 3fifteen was selected as a development and implementation partner for a knowledge-sharing portal that would provide this functionality to AngloGold Ashanti. 3fifteen is Microsoft Gold Certified in Data Management solutions (Business Intelligence), Business Process and Integration, Information Worker solutions, Microsoft Business Solutions (CRM) and Customised Application development making it the perfect partner for the development of an effective, online communications platform based on Microsoft technology.

### A Solution for Sharing

3fifteen and AngloGold Ashanti decided to base the custom developed application on Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003 – the application has since been migrated to Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007. This powerful portal solution would provide a robust platform for an online system that would be utilised by the knowledge sharing application.

3fifteen developed an application called Just ASK!, designed by AngloGold Ashanti and influenced by similar systems in other companies across the globe, that would provide AngloGold Ashanti with a

"AngloGold Ashanti carries a lot of intellectual property within its ranks. Thanks to this solution the organisation is now able to maximise on the value derived from this knowledgebase through a powerful collaboration and communications platform."

**Karl Schoemaker**  
IT Global Programme Manager  
AngloGold Ashanti

powerful portal solution for sharing and recording knowledge. While the application uses SharePoint Portal Server as a platform it can also be run independently.

The application provides AngloGold Ashanti employees with access to a powerful online forum for the exchange of ideas and the coordination of groups. Using Just ASK! employees of AngloGold Ashanti are able to post questions to the portal. These questions can then be accessed by other employees who have agreed to share their knowledge.

But Karl says that once testing of the application began it became apparent that AngloGold Ashanti would also benefit from extended functionality that would allow for the creation of secure online groups focused on specific areas of collaboration.

"This would provide a place where people could discuss or collaborate on specific solutions, issues, problems and other areas," he explains.

In meeting this requirement Fifteen developed an add-on to Just ASK called 'Communities' based on the principle of 'Communities of Practice' (CoP). This allowed for users to create secure groups in Just ASK! and post questions, documents, decisions and requests for membership to these specific 'communities'.

Using Communities it is possible to create either public or private groups and other users can request to become members of communities they would like to contribute to.

The entire system including both Just ASK! and Communities of Practice was rolled out at AngloGold Ashanti and users were then invited to register and use the solution.

## Let the Sharing Begin!

Just ASK! is already in wide use by AngloGold Ashanti employees who are able to list their areas of expertise and knowledge with the system while indicating their willingness to answer questions relating to those fields.

When a user posts a question to the system that pertains to the listed expertise of another registered user or group Just ASK! notifies the listed individuals via email. They are then able to log in and post an answer. Users can rate the quality of the answers they receive and in this way effectively add to the knowledgebase by enabling other users to quickly identify the best responses.

Karl says that the system had processed 160 plus questions, with over 1000 registered users in the first year of use, and is proving to be most effective, and extremely value-adding. "Everyone from foremen through to company executives are getting involved in asking and answering questions," he affirms.

Just ASK! is also available in different languages including English, Spanish, French and Brazilian Portuguese allowing employees from all over the world to share knowledge. Requests can be made via the system contributions to be translated by other users.

"Apart from Just ASK! as such, the Communities has proven its efficacy in allowing for membership-only virtual meeting places where confidential discussions and knowledge exchange can take place," adds Karl. "This was a highly effective addition to the system."

The virtual meeting places are fully incorporated into Just ASK! and can be public, private or secure. A convenor is responsible for the governance of the community ensuring that there is ownership and direction given to the collaboration. Membership is by invitation only with custom approval workflow ensuring that membership is controlled.

Karl says that the next step will be to make the system available to AngloGold Ashanti's retired community via the Internet as it is currently only available internally.

Thanks to this project, AngloGold Ashanti is now able to experience the full benefit of the company's rich knowledge environment and allow employees from across the globe to collaborate in real time.