ATLASSIAN

Helping Atlassian innovate on another front: external support

Atlassian is a developer of software tools with Australian roots and global reach. The company specializes in products that make life easier for software developers, like its Jira project management tool and its Bitbucket code management tool.

When your company crops up frequently in business books and makes software that helps people around the world collaborate better, it would be easy to call it a day.

Not [Atlassian](). The Australian enterprise software company, known for bug tracking and agile product management software Jira Software and team collaboration platform Confluence, is intent on the next revolution: teamwork.

"I really think the way that we do teamwork could ultimately be the next thing that unlocks the next level of human productivity," says [Joe Clark](), the IT product manager working on Contentful implementation. "We're getting to the point now where everything is done by teams and getting teams to work together effectively, communicate effectively and build a shared context of what they're trying to accomplish has consistently been the hardest problem – never the technical challenges."

Contentful is also supporting the teamwork revolution. For example, Atlassian uses Contentful to manage content for a growing list of external support services: help and technical documentation, FAQs, help articles, product documentation, in-product support, and resources for people considering buying Atlassian products. Building these services required collaboration from teams across the company, including content designers, developers, the performance marketing team, and business sponsors. Contentful's strong collaboration features helped Atlassian create, review and publish external support content, and amplify Atlassian's own product set.

Contentful being API-first and highly customizable allowed Atlassian to capitalize on key areas of differentiation within their existing services. Specifically, Atlassian leveraged the powerful rich text Fabric Editor to maintain a strong integration with their stack for collaboration. One of the key

benefits was the ability to combine the Atlassian Confluence-like editing experience their authors love with the capabilities provided by Contentful to scale content.

Publishing workflows, enabled through Contentful, added another big value for Atlassian. Contentful enables one-click publishing, replacing what were previously complex, multi-step processes, Clark says. The result is less time spent wondering who's doing what, whether they have permission to do it and waiting for handoffs from other teams.

SCALING A COMPANY AND ITS CONTENT

Atlassian started like a lot of tech companies: two friends with some big ideas using credit-card debt to bankroll them. While developing the software, the founding team also came up with concepts like ShipIt Days and the Atlassian Team Playbook. The company, which regularly features on "Best Places to Work" lists, is also a best-case scenario in business books like "Culture Fix" and "Build It: The Rebel Playbook for World-Class Employee Engagement."

From a two-person startup to a NASDAQ-listed company with offices in Sydney, Benagluru,

Amsterdam, New York City, Austin, San Francisco, and Mountain View, Atlassian has grown quickly. The spurt resulted in what Karen Cross, head of Content Design, calls "blobs of content" that are inflexible and difficult to organize across products and international markets. Scalability was also at stake. As the company acquired more products and expanded into new markets, content to help customers gain value was crucial. Atlassian also needed to support content for new platforms, experiences, and solutions. The legacy systems that grew organically in the early years limited Atlassian's ability to solve these challenges in a scalable way. "We recognize that shapeless content is hard to do intelligent things with," says John Collins, senior content designer at Atlassian. More structured, modular content became more flexible content. "That's a major change for us as an organization. We really recognize that as powerful."

IN-PRODUCT SUPPORT CONTENT

In the best of worlds, help exists beyond an external support website. A new in-app help experience demonstrated to the Jira team the power of reusable content.

"We've long thought that the most effective place to get people help content is in the product where they need it," Collins says.

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In the midst of a larger project to migrate content to the support portal, the team took on a request from the Jira Software team to power in-product help from Contentful.

"In three months we had content appear in-product in a widget," Collins says. "It was easy for us to implement and a pretty powerful moment for us to have something happen that quickly."

Atlassian's vision is to have help appear in product with the ability to drill down into user's setup and configuration based on what they actually bought. Take, for example, the company's "next-gen service desks" feature. If a user comes to an online help page on the topic, the website doesn't know whether or not the user is allowed to create their own projects, so it has to explain that. In contrast, in-product help can already know whether the user has permission and shows more specific contextual information. "We've already seen good indicators that the content pairing in product is serving users," Collins says.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR CONTENTFUL AND ATLASSIAN?

Teams at Atlassian plan to continue migrating help content with Contentful to their external support site. A couple of custom extensions in the works will also make integration with Contentful easier with a smoother experience for authors.

And, going forward, the Jira project will stand as a textbook-worthy example of two of the company's core values: "build with heart and balance" and "play, as a team."

"With Contentful, we can meet user needs instead of just turning out content."

— *John Collins, Senior Content Designer, Atlassian*